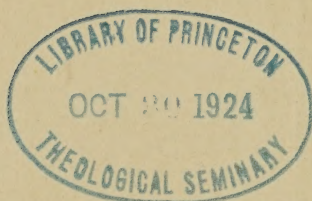


SOME NEW EVIDENCE  
FOR HUMAN SURVIVAL

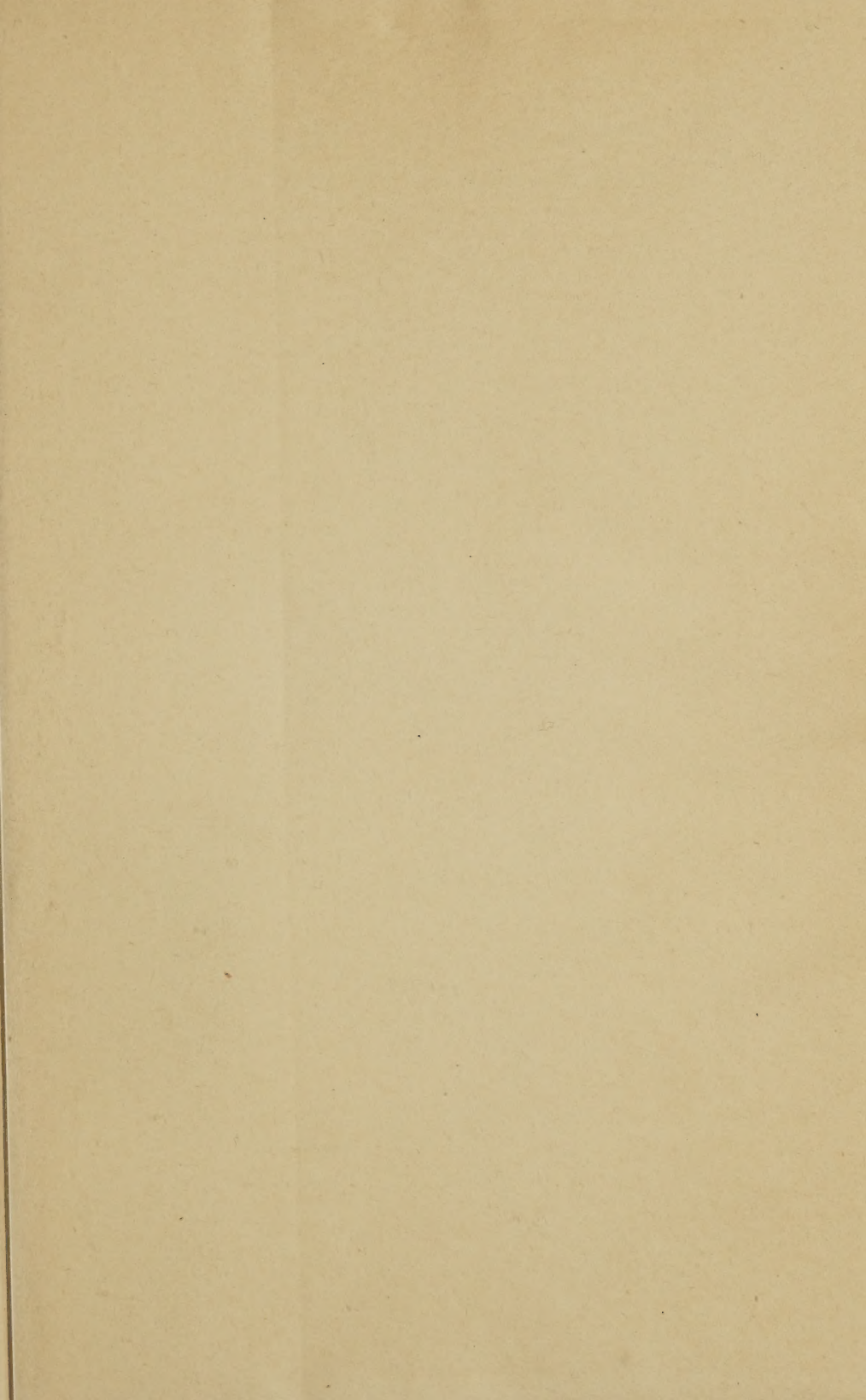
---

The Rev. CHARLES DRAYTON THOMAS



BF 1301 .T465  
Thomas, Charles Drayton,  
1867-  
Some new evidence for human  
survival









SOME NEW EVIDENCE  
FOR HUMAN SURVIVAL





LIBRARY OF PRINCETON  
OCT 20 1924  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

# SOME NEW EVIDENCE FOR HUMAN SURVIVAL

*by*

The Rev. CHARLES DRAYTON THOMAS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

SIR WILLIAM F. BARRETT, F.R.S.

NEW YORK

E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

*Printed in Great Britain*



## AUTHOR'S NOTE

My thanks are due to many who have rendered assistance in matters connected with this book. Especially to Lady Glenconner for her permission to include the incidents recorded in Chapter XII. And to Sir William Barrett, not only for his advice, and his guidance in the arrangement of material, but also for his kindness in writing the Introduction.





# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION BY SIR WILLIAM F. BARRETT, F.R.S.

## PART I

### Book Tests

| CHAP.  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| I. AIM AND METHOD  | 3    |
| II. BOOK TESTS DESCRIBED   | 12   |
| III. BOOK TESTS WITH PERSONAL REFERENCES   | 19   |
| IV. FURTHER EXAMPLES OF BOOK TESTS   | 30   |
| V. HOW FAR MAY CHANCE COINCIDENCE<br>ACCOUNT FOR THE FACTS?  | 42   |
| VI. CAN COLLUSION EXPLAIN? EXPERIMENT<br>WITH A SEALED BOOK  | 49   |
| VII. EXPERIMENT WITH AN UNSEEN BOOKSHELF   | 58   |
| VIII. EXPERIMENT WITH AN UNOPENED PARCEL.<br>EXPERIMENT WITH AN IRON BOX. NOTE<br>ON THE ABOVE RESULTS | 66   |
| IX. CAN BOOK TESTS BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE<br>MEDIUM'S SUPER-NORMAL POWERS?                               | 75   |
| X. INDICATIONS OF IDENTITY   | 90   |
| XI. SUMMARY OF RESULTS   | 97   |
| XII. A FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF BOOK TESTS   | 106  |

## *Contents*

### PART II

#### NEWSPAPER TESTS

| CHAP.       |  | PAGE |
|-------------|--|------|
| XIII.       | NEWSPAPER TESTS ILLUSTRATED  | 119  |
| XIV.        | EXAMINATION OF THE TEST MESSAGES<br>FOR FEBRUARY 14TH, 1920                                    | 131  |
| XV.         | CHANCE COINCIDENCE FAILS TO<br>ACCOUNT FOR THE FACTS   | 150  |
| XVI.        | TESTS RECEIVED FOR OTHERS AND<br>RELATING TO FACTS UNKNOWN TO<br>THE SITTER                    | 155  |
| XVII.       | TESTS GIVEN BEFORE THE TYPE IS IN<br>POSITION  | 165  |
| XVIII.      | EXAMPLES OF NEWSPAPER TESTS, IN-<br>CLUDING SOME OF THE EARLIEST<br>RECEIVED                   | 171  |
| XIX.        | THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SUCCESSFUL TESTS<br>AND NOTE UPON PSYCHOMETRY                              | 184  |
| XX.         | NEWSPAPER TESTS AS VIEWED FROM THE<br>OTHER SIDE   | 201  |
| XXI.        | THE IDENTITY OF THE COMMUNICATOR   | 215  |
| XXII.       | CONCLUDING REMARKS UPON THE EVI-<br>DENCE AFFORDED BY NEWSPAPER<br>TESTS, AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE | 230  |
| APPENDIX A. | REFERENCES PAST AND PRESENT<br>TO ALLIED PHENOMENA   | 238  |
| APPENDIX B. | TESTS FROM THE TITLES OF BOOKS   | 246  |



# INTRODUCTION

BY

SIR W. F. BARRETT, F.R.S.

IN recent years readers have been inundated with books on psychical research, and survival after bodily death; but as the majority of these books have little, if any, evidential value, a fresh book on the subject is apt to be dismissed with scornful impatience. The present volume is of a very different character, and forms, in my opinion, one of the most important contributions yet made towards an experimental solution of the problem of survival after our life on earth.

It is, of course, easy for the vociferous Sadducees of to-day to shrug their shoulders and assert, that, as no evidence can establish such an impossible belief, they decline to waste their time in listening to nonsense. They waive the whole matter aside with a superior gesture, confidently asserting that what cannot be explained by fraud, delusion, or subconscious memory is simply due to the 'will to believe.' But surely such agnostics might remember the ancient proverb : 'He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Proverbs xviii. 13.

## Introduction

Let me therefore beg of them not to persist in the 'will to *disbelieve*' until they have read the evidence here set forth. They will, I expect, find their ingenuity severely taxed in the attempt to explain away the present addition to the growing mass of experimental evidence on behalf of a spiritual body which survives the frame-work of the natural body.

Even that hard-worked hypothesis of telepathy—though this discovery is not as yet accepted by official science—is now appealed to by some sceptics. They forget the ferocious attacks made upon the present writer forty-five years ago, for bringing before the British Association the first evidence on behalf of telepathy; and for daring to ask that a Committee of scientific experts should be appointed to inquire into the possibility of the transmission of impressions and ideas from one mind to another, independently of any known sensory organ.

In view of the telepathic hypothesis, it is interesting to record the fact, that, in 1876 the present writer urged that before we could arrive at any definite conclusion as to the origin of alleged spiritualistic messages, we must first ascertain how far they were explicable by some *transcendental perceptive power* on the part of the psychic or medium—and hence it was necessary to ascertain *in limine*, whether such powers as thought transference and clairvoyance really existed. I believe that every serious student of psychical research will agree that these super-normal faculties have



## *Introduction*

now been established, though additional evidence is necessary before they can be generally accepted by science, owing to their rare and fugitive nature. For a similar reason, and the difficulty of adequate explanation, certain physical phenomena, *e.g.* fire balls, are not generally accepted by science, and a century ago the existence of meteorites was denied.

The great merit of the present volume lies in the fact that the author conclusively shows that any explanation based on telepathy or clairvoyance on the part of the medium, or other person on earth, or any subliminal knowledge possessed by the medium or sitter, fails to account for all the facts he has recorded with such patient care and examined with critical acumen. The hypothesis of intentional or unintentional fraud by the medium is obviously untenable; and there remains only, as a last resort, the possibility of inaccurate recollection and forced interpretation, and finally the long arm of chance coincidence. But these hypotheses Mr. Drayton Thomas has, I think, successfully disposed of; in the first place, by taking full notes at each sitting and sending duplicate copies to other persons the same day, and, in the second place, by examining numerous books and papers, other than those indicated by the unseen communicator, and proving that coincidence, though it may account (as it always does) for a few improbable events, fails to explain the great bulk of the evidence.

This brings me to the nature of the evidence for survival adduced in this volume. It may be divided

## Introduction

into two parts: (1) the so-called '*book tests*,' which had before occurred with other sitters, and have been fully and critically discussed by Mrs. Henry Sidgwick in Part 81 of the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, and (2) the so-called '*news-paper tests*,' which I believe Mr. Drayton Thomas was the first to receive, and of which he has been able to confirm the accuracy in very many cases.

In the *book tests* the exact position of some book in the sitter's or another person's library is named, the page given, and certain words, it is asserted, will be found on that page applicable to the question asked, or appropriate to the unseen communicator. As these tests are generally found to be more or less correct, we must assume, if we reject the spirit hypothesis, some amazing super-normal faculty and knowledge possessed by the medium, who throughout was Mrs. Osborne Leonard. The very cautious conclusion which Mrs. Henry Sidgwick arrives at regarding these book tests is that 'on the whole, I think, the evidence before us does constitute a reasonable *prima facie* case for belief'—in telepathic clairvoyance, *i.e.* 'the perception of external things not known to any one present, but known to some one somewhere.'<sup>1</sup> If this means some one on earth, it will be found that in many of Mr. Drayton Thomas's book tests the evidence goes considerably beyond this and involves a wider scope. However, to those who are willing to admit a new and vast extension of human faculty, and unwilling to admit the survival

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. S.P.R.*, Part LXXXI., April, 1921, p. 377.

## *Introduction*

and agency of disembodied friends, this may seem a probable explanation. In any case we know nothing of the *modus operandi* either of telepathy or clairvoyance. Both may be due to a trans-corporeal action of the soul, in which I for one believe; but if there be an excursive power possessed by the soul, if it can perceive and function independently of the brain, the implication follows that it is likely to survive the dissolution of body and brain.

In some of these book tests, however, information is given which appears inexplicable except on the assumption that it was derived from the memory of the unseen or deceased communicator. Take, for example, some of the remarkable book tests given through Mr. Drayton Thomas to Lady Glenconner, and purporting to come from her gallant and brilliant son, Edward Wyndham Tennant, who was killed in the war. Moreover, one of the most significant facts in the book tests, which purported to come from Mr. Drayton Thomas's father, who was also a Wesleyan minister, is that recorded by the author in Chapter X, p. 91. Out of 209 references to different books, no less than 110 were to religious works, and only two tests were from the numerous scientific volumes in Mr. Drayton Thomas's library: the father had very slight interest in science, but deep interest in and knowledge of theological literature. More striking still is the fact, that, from the four volumes of a religious work, well known to the last generation, and that had belonged to and doubtless been



## *Introduction*

carefully read by his father, fifteen tests were selected, thirteen from one volume alone. Mr. Drayton Thomas has an extensive library, and from seven shelves of books he specially values and frequently refers to, not a single test has been taken. These books are on subjects which would not have appealed to his father when on earth.

Now these facts are of great value as affording a clue to the origin of these tests. It is not the sitter's or the medium's conscious or subconscious mind or memory that is concerned; it indicates the mind or memory of the unseen person who purports to be the communicator. Furthermore, it helps us to glimpse the process at work in that mind; familiar books are recalled, passages in those books are more easily found than in strange, unread books, and in some way a page is found in one of those books and a sentence discerned that conveys the requisite idea. It is useless in our present state of ignorance speculating *how* all this is done; or why, as it seems to us, a much simpler and more direct mode of giving information is not resorted to. Two thousand years ago the jumping up and down of bits of straw beneath a piece of rubbed amber seemed ridiculous, but it was the first revelation of the wonderful and still mysterious power of electricity.

Here let me give an illustration of a book test that was given to me in a sitting with Mrs. Leonard on August 5th, 1921. During her trance Mr. Fred Myers purported to speak to me, through the control Fedra, and gave a 'book

## *Introduction*

test.' He said that there were some books on the right-hand side of a room upstairs in our house in Devonshire Place, which it is important to note Mrs. Leonard has never visited. This statement was quite correct, a bookcase filled with books is on the right-hand side of the drawing-room upstairs. The control continued that, on the second shelf, four feet from the ground, in the fourth book counting from the left, at the top of page 78, are some words which he (Mr. Fred Myers) wishes you to take as a direct answer from himself to so much of the work you have been doing since he passed over. Asked if the name of the book could be given, the reply was 'No,' but that whilst feeling on the cover of the book he got a sense of 'progression.' The control continued: 'Two or three books from this test book are one or two books on matters in which Sir William used to be very interested, but of late years has not been so interested. It is connected with studies of his youth; and he will have particular memories of it, as it will remind him of his younger days.' I had no idea what books were referred to, but on returning home found that, in the exact position indicated, the 'test book' was George Eliot's *Middlemarch*. The cover of the book showed the name conspicuously, the latter half, 'march,' indicating as the control said, 'progression.' On the first line at the top of page 78 are the words, 'Ay, ay, I remember—you'll see I've remembered 'em all,' which quotation is singularly appropriate, as much of my work since Mr. Myers passed over

## Introduction

has been concerned with the question of survival after death and whether the memories of friends on earth continued with the discarnate.

But the most remarkable part of this book test is contained in the sentence, 'two or three books from the book test,' etc. In dusting these bookshelves the maid-servant, unknown to us, had replaced two of George Eliot's novels by two volumes of Dr. Tyndall's books, viz., his *Heat* and *Sound*, which, to my surprise, were found exactly in the position indicated. In my youth I was for some years assistant to Professor Tyndall, and those books were written whilst I was with him, and the investigations and experiments they describe formed 'the studies of my youth.' A careful investigation of all the other shelves and books yielded nothing even remotely applicable to the test given. Chance coincidence, therefore, cannot account for this, nor can travelling clairvoyance explain the matter, as Mrs. Leonard knows nothing of our house, nor of my early life, with which Mr. Myers was familiar.

We now come to the *newspaper tests*. Here we meet with a rare and unexpected phase of psychic faculty. Not only is travelling and telepathic clairvoyance displayed, but in many cases actual *prevision*. The tests refer to certain words that will be found in a given column of the front page of the *Times* or *Daily Telegraph* the next day. The sitting usually lasted from 3 to 5 p.m., and as it seemed doubtful if any part of the next day's paper would then be in type, I communicated



## *Introduction*

with the *Times* publisher as to this, sending him the hour and details of a test given a few months before. The *Times* manager most kindly took up the matter, and the correspondence reveals that collusion was impossible, and that it was doubtful if some of the words selected were even in type at the time of the sitting with Mrs. Leonard. The particulars of this case and the correspondence with the *Times* will be found on pages 158-59, 168-70. The important feature of these newspaper tests is that the information conveyed, though possessed by the discarnate personality, was in many cases utterly unknown to the sitter or the medium.

I will give an illustration of a newspaper test from my own experience. In the sitting with Mrs. Leonard on August 5th, 1921, already referred to, I was told that in the *Times* of the next day, half-way down the second column, would be found the name of a friend of mine, now passed over, whom I knew a few years ago; 'a friend Sir William knew very well and liked greatly, whose books he has, and of whom he was thinking quite lately.' The next morning, on opening the *Times*, exactly half-way down the second column, in large type, was the name DRUMMOND. Henry Drummond, whose books are widely known and are in my library, was an old and beloved friend of mine. Shortly before going to this sitting on August 5th, I noticed he had written his name on his birthday, August 17th, in my copy of George Macdonald's *Diary of an Old Soul*, so that I was thinking of him lately.

## *Introduction*

Feda continued, 'There is another name in the first page of the *Times* to-morrow; a quarter of the way down the second column is the name Taylor; this will remind Sir William of some one he knew in connection with studies he made some years ago, some one older than himself.' In the next morning's *Times*, a quarter of the way down the first (not the second) column, was the name TAYLOR in capital letters. Colonel Taylor was a friend, older than myself, who was on the Council of the S.P.R. and well known both to Mr. Myers and myself. As he lived in Cheltenham, he kindly wrote me a full report of some interesting experiments in dowsing which he conducted at Cheltenham, and which will be found on page 187 of my second report 'On the so-called Divining Rod,' published in 1900.<sup>1</sup> The interesting point here is that the actual name, Taylor, was given by the control; its exact position in the *Times* was indicated, only in the first and not the second column of the first page. Here again chance coincidence affords no explanation, as a reference to other copies of the *Times* clearly demonstrates.

Hitherto there has been little evidence showing that a discarnate personality can exercise prevision, or can find an appropriate passage on a certain page in a particular book in a distant library. And if these transcendental powers are possessed by the discarnate, why should they resort to such cryptic methods, such fragmentary hints, such

<sup>1</sup> See Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research, Vol. XV.

## *Introduction*

shreds and patches of memory. The natural result of this is to make one irritated that they do not contrive some better and simpler means of revealing themselves, their present condition and mode of life, etc. Surely possessing such faculties and intelligence as these tests indicate, they might do more than give us puzzles to solve and mosaics to piece together.

But it is of no use worrying over these anomalies, we know little of the difficulties of communication, and of translating the thoughts and ideas of the discarnate into the symbols of human speech. Imagine the difficulty of explaining any scientific theory or abstruse phenomena to an ignorant though intelligent person, or to one whose language we do not understand, or conveying our ideas to a deaf and blind friend. If such a friend believed we had died, all our efforts would be directed to convince him that he was mistaken, and that we were really his old friend alive and well. Now this attempt to prove identity—that those whom we think dead are really alive and well, seems to be the paramount object of these unseen communicators.<sup>1</sup>

Psychical researchers are well aware of the many plausible explanations that might be given to evade the conclusion that messages purporting

<sup>1</sup> The late Dr. Hyslop, whose experience of American mediumistic phenomena was so wide and searching, arrived at the conclusion that the usual mode of conveying information by the discarnate was by impressing on the medium's mind a picture of the scene or of the ideas to be transmitted, the *pictographic* method Hyslop called it. Certainly there appears great difficulty in conveying actual words, and the roundabout ways seen in these tests may be the effort to surmount this difficulty.



## Introduction

to be from deceased friends are really what they profess to be. It is only since the passing over of our friends Gurney, Myers, Sidgwick, etc., who often discussed this matter, that new types of evidence have been presented to us. More than ten years ago I wrote: 'It is a significant fact that evidence of this kind (*i.e.* inexplicable by any subliminal knowledge of the sitter or of the medium, or telepathy from the living), the desirability of which had been pointed out by Frederic Myers in his earthly life, has begun to appear since his passing over, and not only so, but the initiation of it apparently came from him.'<sup>1</sup> The first attempt at a new type of evidence was the so-called *cross correspondences*, which seemed devised to exclude the plausible objections referred to above; nevertheless, in spite of this new evidence, on the next page of my book on *Psychical Research*, I wrote: 'Conclusive proof of the fact (of survival after death) in any given instance, is made almost impossible, for the present at least, when our ignorance can set no limit to the scope of telepathic powers.' This objection seems to have been met by the next type of evidence given to us, after the passing over of that eminent Greek scholar and keen psychical researcher, Prof. A. W. Verrall. The intricate Greek mosaic and literary puzzle called the *Ear of Dionysius* affords, in the opinion of the Right Hon. Gerald Balfour, and other competent judges, one of the most striking evidences of survival yet obtained. It apparently demonstrated the combined

<sup>1</sup> *Psychical Research*, p. 229, Home University Library.

## *Introduction*

and continued vigorous mental activity of two eminent classical scholars—the late Professors Verrall and Butcher.

Whilst these two types of evidence afforded satisfaction to the painstaking student and classical scholar, they were beyond the grasp of, or too intricate to appeal to, the wayfaring man. Hence our friends in the unseen appear to have devised the new and simpler types of evidence seen in these book and newspaper tests. These obviously depend upon extraordinary faculties, the possession of which was not previously ascribed to the discarnate, and may indeed be exceptional among them and attained only after a time and by strenuous effort.

It is interesting to note in this connection, that in certain messages received by Mr. Drayton Thomas, the unseen communicator, who purports to be his father, states that he has been directed and helped by others in the unseen who are in a higher state of knowledge than he enjoys at present. Possibly this may refer to the eminent psychical researchers I have alluded to.

Incidentally, one value of these researches is the training of the mind, both of the experimenter and the reader, in the search for *truth*. Confronted by the tremendous issues of the problem, 'If a man die shall he live again,' the mind has to free itself from all prepossession and traditional beliefs, pursuing the quest in absolute honesty and sincerity, with the exercise of unlimited patience and courage. It seems strange that it should require

## Introduction

courage on the part of a clergyman to try and establish experimentally an affirmative answer to the above question. Yet, until quite recently, few clergy or other public men dare risk their reputation by engaging in this quest. The more enlightened clergy are no longer opponents of psychical research; but this is not the case with the majority of the religious laity, more especially among Nonconformists. Hence Mr. Drayton Thomas is to be congratulated on the courage, as well as the zeal and scientific spirit, he has shown in conducting for some years past the investigations he has described in this volume.

Sceptics too often forget that mere negations are of no value when confronted with the affirmative evidence of trustworthy witnesses. What a man *denies* is seldom worth attention, and adds nothing to our knowledge; but what any one *affirms* as a fact in his experience is always worth attention. As Professor William James once said,—‘If you wish to upset the law that all crows are black, you mustn’t seek to show that no crows are; it is enough if you prove one single crow to be white,’ and he adds—‘My own white crow is Mrs Piper. In the trances of this medium I cannot resist the conviction that knowledge appears which she has never gained by the ordinary use of her eyes and ears and wits.’<sup>1</sup>

Remarkable as are these book and newspaper tests, they do not afford any evidence of human

<sup>1</sup> Presidential Address S.P.R. January 31st, 1896. *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, Vol. XII, p. 5.



## Introduction

survival when taken alone without collateral evidence. They are evidence of the super-normal faculties of clairvoyance and precognition, sometimes exhibited by certain persons in dream, or in hypnotic trance, and often in crystal vision during the sensitive's normal waking state. How these faculties are exercised we do not know; but they do not, as already said, necessarily imply any discarnate agency, beyond a possible excursive action of the soul of the living sensitive.

It is only when these tests are taken in conjunction with the evidence they afford of knowledge not possessed by the entranced medium, but possessed by the deceased person who purports to communicate through the control, that we are justified in seeking their origin outside any super-normal faculties enjoyed by the medium. Even in that case we need to scrutinise the evidence critically, and to eliminate information that might possibly be derived telepathically from the subconscious content of the minds of those present. I do not attach so much importance to this hypothesis as others have done; but it will be seen that the author has discussed this question, and that the *cumulative* effect of the evidence he gives is strongly in favour of the survival of human personality after the dissolution of body and brain.

To my sceptical friends may I in conclusion commend the following words of that able thinker, Dr. F. C. S. Schiller: 'A mind unwilling to believe or even undesirous to be instructed, our weightiest

### *Introduction*

evidence must ever fail to impress. It will insist on taking that evidence in bits and rejecting item by item. As all the facts come singly, any one who dismisses them one by one is destroying the condition under which the conviction of new truth could ever arise in the mind.'

## PART I





## CHAPTER I

### AIM AND METHOD

THIS book sets forth one class of evidence among many pointing to the possibility of conversing with friends who have passed through death. It is written chiefly for the consideration of those who desire evidence. Yet others who, on grounds of religious belief, or of personal experience, are fully assured concerning the reality of future existence, may here find welcome supplementary proof.

Uncertainty on this supreme question has an inevitable influence upon thought and character, an influence unwholesome and frequently mischievous.

If any have closed their minds against the reception of evidence, they are scarcely likely to peruse these pages. Experience, whether in this life or the next, will, I believe, lead them to realise their mistake.

I write for those who permit the windows of the mind to remain open; to such this book may reveal the light of a day that shall never end in night.

Early in 1917 it became possible to undertake the systematic investigation of psychic phenomena to which I had looked forward during many years of reading. To investigate personally is altogether

## *Aim and Method*

different from studying the opinions and experiences of others ; indeed I am increasingly persuaded that only by some amount of actual first-hand knowledge can any one rightly appraise the full significance of phenomena pointing to the survival of bodily death.

Having no adequate psychic gifts of my own, it was necessary to seek the assistance of others, and for some months I studied with variously gifted persons the phenomena of clairvoyance, psychometric ability, trance, and the direct voice. From each I was able to learn much, but finally concluded that deep trance speaking was the method by which the investigation could be best pursued.

Experiment with several persons who had developed their ability for trance speaking decided me to arrange for a long series of studies with Mrs. Osborne Leonard, my results with her seeming to indicate possibilities of considerable improvement. For five years I have followed up this line of research, and have had over one hundred sittings in which she passes into the trance state and her mental and vocal organism is at the temporary disposal of 'Feda.' Feda is the name given to Mrs. Leonard's so-called 'control.'

There has been discussion in learned circles as to the real nature of a 'control,' and some tendency to regard it as an instance of 'secondary personality.' Looking at the considerable body of evidence which has accumulated during my researches, I see no logical alternative but to regard Feda as an intelligent and kindly woman, who,

### *Aim and Method*

from spirit life, devotes a part of her time to assisting, in the capacity of interpreter, intermediary, or messenger, those less practised than herself, who desire to make use of the medium's trance condition for communicating with their friends on earth.

It would be beside the purpose of this book to enter into a discussion of the evidence for Feda's actuality as a person distinct from Mrs. Leonard. The facts to be related do not depend upon any particular interpretation of the part taken by Feda in the matter; and I shall therefore allude to her as if she were, what she asserts herself to be, a person who receives the ideas which one's communicator wishes to transmit, and who then succeeds in getting them voiced by the vocal organism of the medium.

In view of prevalent misconception about the nature of a trance sitting, it may be well to describe in detail the procedure uniformly followed at my interviews with this medium.

On arrival at the house I am greeted by either Mr. Leonard or his wife, and pass at once into the room where the sittings are held. Taking a seat I arrange note-book and papers before me on a table where stands a lighted lamp. The curtains of the room are drawn so as to exclude the greater part of the light, but there is always sufficient illumination from windows and lamp to make clearly visible everything within the room. Darkness would appear to be essential for the production of certain kinds of physical phenomena with which

### *Aim and Method*

we are not here in any way concerned ; and this shading of the room is to facilitate an easy and rapid passing into the peculiar kind of sleep called trance. Mrs. Leonard takes her seat, back towards the light, at a distance of two or three feet from me. During trance there is a tendency for the body to lose warmth more rapidly than usual, and in cold weather there is a good fire some nine feet behind the medium.

The accompanying sketch-plan makes clear the respective positions just described ; it relates to the room at present used, but, except for the position of the fireplace, would apply equally well to others.

When we are both seated there is a period of silence lasting two or three minutes. During this time there is a change in the medium's breathing and some of the usual indications of falling asleep. Then there commences a faint whispering of which I can sometimes catch fragments, such as: ' Yes . . . wait. . . . Yes, Mr. John, Feda will tell him. . . . Yes, all right. . . .' Suddenly, in a clear voice and with much animation, Feda greets me and announces who are present, invariably one whom she calls Mr. John, and sometimes others. Feda's voice and manner cannot for a moment be confused with Mrs. Leonard's. Occasionally one may catch a fleeting reminder of the latter's intonation, but nothing more. The voice and vivacity suggest a particularly sprightly and mentally alert girl of, say, eighteen years of age. I have made no attempt in recording conversations transmitted through her to reproduce the clipping



### *Aim and Method*

of certain words and the frequent lapses from grammar which characterise Feda's speech. Feda accounts for them by saying that when living on earth she was not English.

For the first two years Feda simply interpreted, receiving what purported to be the conversation of my communicators and transmitting it sentence by sentence through the medium's lips. At the end of that period I began to observe that for a short period in the sitting there was a change, the effect being exactly as if Feda had retired for the time and another had taken her place. This was explained as an attempt on the part of a communicator to speak to me direct without Feda's mediation. At first these efforts were laboured, but with practice the apparent difficulties were overcome.

It now regularly happens that, when Feda has been interpreting for an hour, she intimates that one or other of my friends wishes to take her place. She bids me farewell and silence supervenes. Shortly whisperings are heard, which change almost immediately into a clear voice, a voice entirely different from Feda's and equally distinct from that of Mrs. Leonard. For the remainder of the sitting I am conversing freely with the communicator. He or she, as it may be (for two of them take turns), cannot reproduce the tones with which I was familiar during their life on earth, but they do unquestionably preserve their own individual characteristics ; each speaks in a voice and manner uniformly consistent, never showing any tendency

### *Aim and Method*

to gravitate towards that of the other, of Feda, or of the normal Mrs. Leonard.

The duration of the sitting varies from an hour and three-quarters to two hours and a half, the difference in length depending in some way, I think, upon the mental and physical vigour of the medium and sitter for the time being. If one is weary in body or mind it seems to shorten the period during which something they term 'the power' will hold out. The diminishing of this 'power' appears to make it difficult for the speakers to express themselves as they desire, and experience enables them to decide the precise moment beyond which it is not well to continue.

Farewell having been said on both sides, there is silence for one or two minutes, after which Mrs. Leonard rises from the chair and, drawing back the curtains, appears to be entirely her normal self again, none the worse for the two hours' sleep, but quite fresh and alert.

Although not relevant to anything in this book, it may be of interest to add that during the whole of the sitting the medium's eyes appear to be closed; yet, notwithstanding this, Feda, or whoever may be in control at the time, is able to 'see' me and the objects in the room. Of this there is sufficient evidence, but its significance need not detain us.

For statements requiring great accuracy, as in giving certain kinds of tests, it is found advisable, in the opinion of my communicators, to remain unencumbered by the care involved in taking

## *Aim and Method*

personal control. The literary allusions about to be described were received by me from my chief communicator through Fedá.

I have used the term 'my communicator,' and it may be well here, at the outset, to explain what is in my mind when this word is used, as it must be very frequently, throughout the book.

The complete story will be reserved for another place; the following is its outline. My father, the Rev. John D. Thomas, passed on in the year 1903, and during the fourteen years which had elapsed between that and my first sitting I had lost by death several friends. Some of these, I imagined, would be more likely to respond to my attempted communication than my father, whose interest in the subject had never been pronounced. It was therefore with some surprise that, from the earliest sittings onward, I heard of his presence and discovered that he was able and wishful to communicate with me. Mrs. Leonard's control always alludes to him as 'Mr. John.'

His mind had always been logical, and these first communications dealt skilfully with evidences of his identity. He proved his identity. That proof I reserve for description on some other occasion; it is not required for my present purpose, which is merely to present a particular line of evidence given subsequently to the day when I stated to him my entire satisfaction with those proofs of identity which he had given. The reply on that occasion was characteristic of my father as I had known him in earthly life; it was to the

## *Aim and Method*

effect that one could not have too much good evidence, and that since my object was not personal satisfaction, but the collection of information which might benefit others, he would continue to lay a strong and broad foundation of fact upon which to subsequently build.

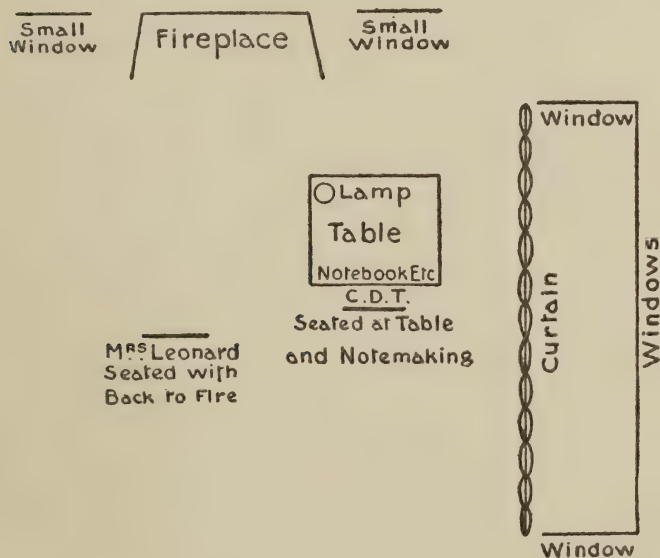
It was some weeks after this that there commenced the book test series, which was later followed by newspaper tests ; these two form the subject-matter of the present book. It is a line of evidence selected from among many, and convenient to treat in isolation from the others. Should the attempt to set forth my material in a lucid and comprehensible way be successful, this book will form yet another contribution to the considerable accumulation of evidential matter, which, during recent years, has been gathered for the use of thoughtful minds—minds desirous of certainty as to human survival and the possibility of verbal communication with departed friends.

By stating my position thus early in the book, I am absolved from the necessity of adding qualifying phrases when alluding to the communicator. I may be permitted to write exactly what I think and speak of him as 'my father,' especially when, after some of the earlier chapters, good cause has been shown for my logical right so to do. Yet, in deference to the more fastidious readers, I shall restrain myself to some extent and retain the term 'communicator' in many places where 'father' would be more in consonance with my habits of thought.



## *Aim and Method*

Needless to say, reading and discussion have frequently brought me into touch with persons who assert that proof of any message having originated in the spirit world is, together with evidence for the identity of a supposed communicator, absolutely unattainable. Should any holding that opinion deign to read my book, I ask them to consider the possibility of their having been mistaken, and would express the hope that they may find it within their power to trace the steps of the following argument with an open mind, honestly weighing the evidence adduced and considering whither it points.



## CHAPTER II

### BOOK TESTS DESCRIBED

*' During the last few years a special type of phenomenon has developed with Mrs. Leonard, known under the name of "book tests," the nature of which I will briefly indicate. An attempt is first made to identify a particular bookcase in the sitter's house by mentioning its position in regard to other features of the room in which it stands—the door, for instance, or the windows ; sometimes other articles of furniture are described in some detail. In successful cases sitters are able to assert that they know of one bookcase only to which the description would apply. A shelf is next indicated—for instance, the second from the top—and a particular book in the shelf, say, the fourth from the left. The number of a page in the book is then given and, usually, some indication as to the part of the page, "near the top," "about half-way down," and so forth. The field having been thus narrowed down, some statement follows as to what the sitter may expect to find in the passage indicated.'*<sup>1</sup>

Regarding these book tests Sir Oliver Lodge says, *' The evident object is to send messages in such form that they shall be unintelligible, not only to the*

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. W. H. Salter, Hon. Editor to *The Society for Psychical Research*. See article in *The Psychic Research Quarterly* for January, 1921, entitled, 'Two Noteworthy Book Tests.'

## Book Tests Described

*medium of communication and to the person receiving them, but to everybody, until the clue is followed up and the message decoded, when the meaning ought to be unmistakable. If tests of this kind are successfully accomplished, it is plain that no simple kind of mind-reading can be appealed to or regarded as a rational explanation.'*<sup>1</sup>

Since the following pages contain numerous references to volumes in my study, it may be well at the outset to state that Mrs. Leonard has never entered our house, nor has she been afforded any opportunity whatsoever for ascertaining information about the contents of our book-shelves.

My introduction to book tests was on June 14th, 1917, when I was informed that a band of those on the other side had planned a long series of them, that they were designed for a definite purpose, and that they would be given to others also. I was asked to keep careful notes of mine, and this I have done. Examples in this book are transcribed from those notes and the subsequent verifications. The communicator purported to be my father. One of the preliminary statements is worthy of consideration in view of characteristics marking the earlier tests. He said, 'I "sensed" the *appropriate spirit of the passage* rather than the letters composing it.' But after eighteen months he appeared to acquire a power of occasionally seeing the words by some sort of clairvoyance. The gradual transition from 'sensing' to 'clair-

<sup>1</sup> See Prefatory Note by Sir Oliver Lodge to Lady Glenconner's book, *The Earthen Vessel*. Publisher, John Lane.

### *Book Tests Described*

voyance,' with its successful culmination in 'newspaper tests' giving exact names, is an interesting study.

It has been objected that it is physically impossible to obtain correct information from the pages of a closed book. Possibly so. But what if we are here dealing with powers no longer limited by physical conditions? The powers of a freed spirit may far transcend ours. We can but study the facts brought before our notice, endeavouring to deduce the laws governing their origin.

How is it that the exact page can be correctly given? I was informed that this was one of the greatest difficulties, as the 'sensing' method did not enable a spirit operator to decipher the number printed on the page, and so calculation was necessary. The impression left on my mind by attempted explanations of the method used was that, when a page had been fixed upon as containing a thought suitable for the test, the operator counted the pages between that and the commencement, and that this counting was done by a process similar to that employed by us when we rapidly 'skim' a book. The operator usually starts where the flow of thought commences, and when it ceases and recommences higher up he concludes that he has passed from the bottom of one page to the top of another. In this way, they say, it is found practicable to compute the number of pages between the commencement and the passage fixed upon for the test. When verifying one usually counts from



### *Book Tests Described*

the commencement of the printed matter, disregarding fly-leaves and the printer's numbering.

The following examples illustrate the classes, personal and general, into which book tests may be divided. The first connects the test-passage with a happening in our home, the others are more general.

#### I

We had discussed the possibility of audible sound being produced by my communicator to attract our attention at home. He tried, but rarely succeeded in making knocks which might not be attributed to ordinary creakings in floor or furniture. One night, however, I concluded that a special effort had been made and that the result was a definite success; for thrice I heard a loud double knock. I noted the incident and added it to a list of such items kept for reference. Three days later, at an interview with Mrs. Leonard, Feda *greeted me* with the assertion that *she* had succeeded in coming to our house and giving taps there. Owing to the fact that she could not hear her own raps, she had to judge whether they were loud or otherwise, but considered that she had given both loud and soft, a loud rap being followed by slight taps intended to spell out her name by the usual alphabetical code. I told her that while clearly hearing the loud raps, I had not heard the softer ones.

## *Book Tests Described*

A few minutes later the following book test was given:—

‘He thinks you will be amused by the following test. It is in a book behind your study door, the second shelf from the ground, and fifth book from the left end. *Near the top of page 17 you will see words which serve to indicate what Feda was attempting to do when knocking in your room.* Now that you are aware that it was Feda’s attempt you will see the *unmistakable bearing of these words upon it.*’

On returning home I found this book to be a volume of Shakespeare which commences with *King Henry VI.*, and the third line from the top of the indicated page was number 69 of Scene 3 in Act I. It reads, ‘I will not answer thee with words, but blows.’

The following are examples of the more general type of book tests which have ranged variously over description, humour, topics of the day, philosophy, and religion.

## II

‘In your study close to the door, the lowest shelf, take the sixth book from the left, and page 149; three-quarters down is a word conveying the meaning of falling back or stumbling.’

Rather more than half-way down this page was

### *Book Tests Described*

the following sentence: ‘. . . to whom a crucified Messiah was an insuperable stumbling-block.’

*Directions for finding the required book and page will be usually omitted from this point onward, it being understood that these were in every instance given with exact precision.*

#### III

‘Very low on the page he seemed to get something about great noise, not a sharp, thin sound, but a heavy one, more of a roaring noise.’

Close to the bottom of this page was the sentence: ‘I chanced to come that time along the coast and heard the guns for two or three days and nights successively.’

#### IV

The exact position of the book having been described, I was asked to turn to a given page and there see stated, *half-way down*, an argument which I was likely to hear frequently from the lips of incredulous critics of spirit communications; and also, immediately following that, a few words which might be very properly quoted as an answer to such adverse criticism. ‘You would not,’ said he, ‘employ those words verbatim, yet should you do so they would be a correct reply.’

### *Book Tests Described*

The dialogue found *half-way down* the page designated ran as follows:—

Says No. 1—‘ I had an idea that I should meet you here. The thought came to me.’

No. 2 replies—‘ I expect that was transmission of thought.’

No. 1 answers—‘ Yes, I know.’

How appropriate is this. Critics of spirit communications say, ‘ It is all telepathy, merely an instance of transmission of thought.’ And our reply is, ‘ Certainly that seems to be the method employed. But by whom? You say from earthly minds, we say it is from spirit friends. But it is obviously transmission of thought in either case.’



## CHAPTER III

### BOOK TESTS WITH PERSONAL REFERENCES

THE following exemplify the more personal type of book tests, a large class in which the passage to be found is made to connect in some way with my work, our home life, or, occasionally, with the communicator. These references to himself are of special interest as contributions toward the evidence of his identity.

The question of personal identity is crucial, and will be dealt with more fully in chapters devoted to newspaper tests. *The book tests were given, so it was claimed, not so much for proof of identity as illustrating the ability of a spirit to obtain information unknown to the sitter or the medium, and yet capable of easy verification.*

I shall refrain from giving many examples of personal book tests, because they cannot have for others anything of the intense interest and evidential value which they had when received by me.

#### I

Two lady visitors had joined us one evening at an experimental table sitting, and among the messages spelled out by means of tiltings by the table was one purporting to be given by Fedá.

### *Book Tests with Personal References*

Both ladies were strongly mediumistic, and the table moved with much vigour. *My theory in accounting for such movements was that, from the sitters, there emanated a semi-material force or substance which was utilised by the communicating intelligences to impart motion to the table*, causing it to tilt while we spelled out the alphabet, and stopping it at the letter they required. I further supposed that, *at the close of such sittings, this semi-material force was reabsorbed into the bodies from whence it had been drawn*. Five days later, during a sitting with Mrs. Leonard, came the following:—

‘In your study, behind the door, third shelf up, and third book from the right, look at the top part of page 62. You will there find a passage which will be quite striking if you take it as referring to your table sitting with two ladies recently, take it very literally and it will make a clear allusion.’

This is the passage commencing four lines from the top of that page: ‘The divine hero, however, does not consent to suffer *the substance which has emanated from him, and which is part of himself, to perish*. He seeks to disengage it by degrees, and *to reabsorb it in himself*.’ I have italicised the more specially relevant words.

## II

Among the earlier book tests received in 1917 the following was of particular interest as evidencing acquaintance with four facts which Mrs. Leonard

### *Book Tests with Personal References*

was not at all likely to know, viz.: my visit to a psychometrist three years before, the deafness of a near relation of my wife's, the fact that we were thinking of leaving our house, and the name of my wife's sister. The test commenced with a very accurate description of a little room where we had a hanging book-shelf. Not only was the whereabouts of the book required given very precisely, but I was asked to notice that on the back of the adjoining volume there was a word looking like 'A-sh-ill-ee.' In saying this name Fedra warned me that she was giving the sound, but not its correct spelling. I discovered on returning home that the book standing next was by Mrs. Ashley Carus-Wilson. A-sh-ill-ee is phonetically quite good for Ashley.

Next I was told to turn to page 87 and less than half-way down to 'see something about "endeavour" again, but under different conditions and aspects from the last time.' The previous test had been about spiritual endeavour, and this reference proved to be part of a story in which a lady tried in vain to make a very deaf woman understand her wishes, and continued to try unsuccessfully.

Fedra continued:—

'There is a word commencing with "M" which has an important place in it and a bearing on the message, but this point is an aside and unimportant.'

The verb, 'to make,' is used several times—  
'make her understand.'

## *Book Tests with Personal References*

The test proceeded:—

‘Do not take these tests too personally; it might not be complimentary. But your father says that he might make use of this one if writing to you in a fatherly way; for it fits the conditions of your life three years back, also it will bring in something which connects with your wife.’

Now three years previously I had my first sitting with a psychometrist.<sup>1</sup> I had offered my ring, and from it had been ‘sensed’ curious information which interested and puzzled me. The psychometrist then proceeded to give what purported to be messages from the spirit world, but which I did not find easy to understand, nor was there any clue as to the person from whom they were supposed to emanate. Being more interested in the psychometry, I gave little attention to the messages. In the light of this test and other more recently acquired knowledge, I think that my father had endeavoured on that occasion (the first opportunity I had given him since his passing) to attract attention to his willingness to communicate with me, but had failed to get his message intelligibly transmitted. It was true, if I am correct in this supposition, that three years ago he ‘could not make me hear’ what he wished to say.

But how did this incident about endeavour with a deaf person make connection with my wife? This was easy to understand; one of her near

<sup>1</sup> See note on psychometry, Chapter XIX:



### *Book Tests with Personal References*

relations is deaf and some effort is necessary if he is to be made aware of what one is saying. At my next interview with Mrs. Leonard I asked if the above was what my communicator intended to imply by his book test? Fedra replied, 'Yes,' and then to my surprise added, 'but there is something more which you have not noticed; it brings in some one else, and there is a clue to it lower down the page.' Searching the page again with this in mind, I found the clue in the words, 'It was a nice place, and he never wished to leave it,' and on turning the leaf I found that the next chapter had for heading, 'Lilian gives her advice.' This made things interesting; we had been thinking of leaving our house, and Lilian is the name of my wife's sister, who had just previously arranged to accompany us in viewing a locality where we hoped to find another house, and to give us the benefit of her advice in its selection.

When subsequently I congratulated my communicator upon his intimate knowledge of our affairs, his comment was to the effect that they notice much more about their friends on earth than they used to do when living here.

### III

From the same book as the above, a book which I had never read or even glanced at, was given a test which has an interesting bearing upon *the identity of the communicator*. Fedra said:—

### *Book Tests with Personal References*

‘ One of the opening scenes almost describes a place where you and he have lived together; it is near the start of a chapter and near the beginning of the book.’

On page seven was described the house of a doctor facing a village green: ‘ The little green with its intersecting paths and seats was so quaintly peaceful; and across it on the opposite side were a few old houses, and the red-brick church and schools and the vicarage. . . . It was rather an old-world corner.’

My father and I had lived together in but one place boasting a green, and this was Toddington in Bedfordshire. There lived a doctor in an old-looking house facing the green. There were paths round and across this green. It was quaintly peaceful, as we often remarked. Here and there around it were ancient houses. The church was at one corner (although not of red bricks), while school and vicarage were a little way beyond the green (though not facing it). Quite an ‘ old-world corner,’ and this description is the more remarkable as not a trace of it would apply to any other of the many places in which my father and I had lived together.

At the sitting next following there was a further reference to this place, but taken from another book:—

‘ About a third down the page there is a description, contained in several lines, say four to six for the gist of it, of a place where you

### *Book Tests with Personal References*

and he were together. In that place your activities were merged into one, in a way that was not always possible when he was on earth; this refers to one of the times when this was possible. You will recognise it by certain circumstances attendant on the time he speaks of, these are literally referred to here.'

The following items are extracted from the designated page, occurring more or less a third the way down as stated. 'One walked as it were a little above the country . . . wagons crawling over the country roads; one could hear their axles complaining a mile away, coming nearer . . . and the people, little clumps . . . turning aside to go to their own villages.'

All this is perfectly accurate of Toddington as we knew it in 1900-1. My father lived there with me for six months and volunteered to take a considerable share of my work, preaching in the villages, attending meetings and helping in visiting. Only once before had such a sharing of our work been possible, but at Toddington it was much more complete and for a longer period. The description in the above extracts is very characteristic of the neighbourhood. Many of our walks were on high ground with far-reaching views; in the still air of the unfrequented locality carts could be heard, especially towards evening, grinding along the roads a mile or more away; there were one or two villages quite near and a certain amount of coming and going among the villagers.

### *Book Tests with Personal References*

*These two descriptions, so perfectly applicable to a place where my father and I had worked together, could only have been selected by one acquainted with our location and work in those six months of 1900-1; for at no other period of my life would there have been any relevancy thereto.*

The former book containing the reference to the village green was one which I had never read; the latter book I had read fifteen years previously, but retained no conscious recollection of the description which proved to fit the Toddington neighbourhood. It is not a case of collusion; for no one living in our house had ever been to Toddington or knew about its Green, while no one outside our house would be likely to know the position of these books upon our shelves, even had they divined the relevancy to Toddington of the two descriptions. It cannot be an instance of telepathy from my subconscious mind, since I had not read the book containing the description of the Green. Nor does it look like coincidence; for I have found no similar descriptions elsewhere, although such may very well exist; and the directions given for finding these were so definite as to warrant some other explanation.

Grant that my father was communicating, and that he recollected the place and the circumstances of his work there, then all is explained save *the method* by which the selected passages are observed between the covers of closed books.

In support of the opinion that it was actually my father himself who originated this test based upon memories which we held in common, I here



### *Book Tests with Personal References*

introduce a further reference to Toddington, given more than three years after the above. It was spoken by way of parenthesis in the midst of tests to be verified by reference to the *Times* of the following day. The name 'Fowler' was suddenly introduced, and I was asked whether I remembered a man of that name whom my father had also known? I did, but was careful to give away no information beyond this mere assent, and the communication through Feda continued as follows:—

'Do you remember a place "D" connected with him? Also a place "M" in which he was interested in another way, something smaller like a street, house, or an address?'

Feda hurried on without waiting or expecting a reply; she has a habit of expressing things interrogatively when not quite clear as to the communicator's exact meaning, but never insists on replies.

'Mr. Fowler was a very useful man; your father found him useful and so did most of the people associated with him. He lived near a green place, a green square. Your father knew that green very well. Do you also remember a funny little building, which was not a church, nor a house, but with which Mr. Fowler was connected? It seems to Feda that this building is not high, and not quite by itself, but as if built at the side of another one. Mr. Fowler was rather particularly linked with the lesser building.'

### *Book Tests with Personal References*

All this is perfectly intelligible, as may be shown by setting it out in sections with explanations appended.

1. 'Do you remember a place "D" connected with him?'

In addition to his place of business at Toddington Mr. Fowler had a branch establishment in the neighbouring town of Dunstable.

2. 'Also a place "M" in which he was interested in another way, something smaller like a street, house, or an address?'

Being Circuit Steward at the time, Mr. Fowler was responsible for the upkeep of the Manse in which I lived. 'M' may very well stand for Manse; note the increasing accuracy of approach, 'something smaller (than a town)—street—house—address.' A sufficient postal address would have been—The Manse, Toddington, Beds.

Mr. Fowler's interest in the Manse was certainly 'in another way' from his interest in Dunstable, where his business lay.

3. 'Mr. Fowler was a very useful man; your father found him useful and so did most of the people associated with him.'

He was the most prominent official in connection with our Wesleyan Church while my father and I were working together at Toddington in the

### *Book Tests with Personal References*

winter of 1900. He rendered much service in various departments of Church work, was the one who welcomed us on arrival, and proved himself a good friend during the time of our residence.

4. 'He lived near a green place, a green square. Your father knew that green very well.'

This agrees with the green to which reference has been made in the foregoing test. Mr. Fowler lived scarcely a stone's throw from this green, which occupies the centre of the place, and is more or less square in shape.

5. 'Do you also remember a funny little building, which was not a church, nor a house, but with which Mr. Fowler was connected? It seems to Feda that this building is not high, and not quite by itself, but as if built at the side of another one. Mr. Fowler was rather particularly linked with the lesser building.'

This is perfectly accurate as applied to the classroom which projected at right angles from the rear of our Wesleyan Church. Mr. Fowler regularly officiated at meetings held therein in connection with the round of Church activities.

## CHAPTER IV

### FURTHER EXAMPLES OF BOOK TESTS

UPON first acquaintance with book tests certain questions relating to the likelihood of coincidence, or the possibility of collusion, spring almost inevitably to the mind. These are noticed in the next and following chapters, and it may be that some readers will prefer to pass immediately to those sections, feeling no inclination for further examples until assured that book tests represent an unquestionably psychic phenomenon.

Yet in dealing with so considerable a collection of disconnected items, it will be advantageous to display in due order the material upon which final conclusions must be based, more especially as some of the book messages given in this chapter will be referred to in our progressive argument.

In form, a book test may be either a single statement, or one compounded of two or more items from the same book.

The subject-matter may be either general or personal; in the latter case it is connected in some way with the life or surroundings of the person to whom it is given, or to the alleged communicator.

Most interesting of all are those personal tests which contain internal evidence of the identity of the communicator; of such the Toddington



### *Further Examples of Book Tests*

incident recorded in the previous chapter is an example.

#### I

An exact description of the position of the book and page was first given, and then the message continued:—

‘Near the top, say one-quarter down, you will see reference to a religious change, and almost underneath it are words expressing what your father would have felt about such a change.’

The book was, *Dr. McLaren of Manchester*, and one-quarter down this indicated page are lines from an early letter by Dr. McLaren, *telling of his conversion*. The words lower down, which are said to express what my father would have felt about such a change are, ‘This letter . . . supplies the keynote to his whole life.’ They are absolutely the expression of my father’s unvarying pronouncement upon the influence of conversion; to him it was indeed the keynote to which the whole life harmonised.

This test continued:—

‘On the same page, lower down, is reference to a portrait, and something about it will remind you of one in your possession. This has to do, not with a description in words,

### *Further Examples of Book Tests*

but refers to an actual portrait, and you have one.'

The letter quoted on this page ends with the signature *A. McLaren*, and it may be said that this refers to a portrait; inasmuch as the first page has a reproduction of a painting of McLaren, and the book contains several photographs of him.

The message may have been rendered less clear by transmission through an interpreter who did not quite grasp what was in the mind of the communicator.

## II

The exact whereabouts of a book (proving to be *The New Theology*, by the Rev. R. J. Campbell) having been described, there were given several accurate descriptions of it, such as, 'The book refers to old time, hundreds of years ago.' It is based upon New Testament writings and The Gospel Story. 'Page 122 seems to be heavy and serious and upon an abstruse subject.' This chapter discusses various theories of the Atonement. 'The word Semitic is within a few pages of 122, and also mention of ancient races.' On page 129 appear 'Greek,' 'Israel,' 'Babylonians,' 'Assyrians,' and 'Egypt,' while the title of the chapter in which this page falls is, 'Semitic Ideas of Atonement.'

Having once or twice said 'Semitics,' Fedra remarked, 'Your father is rubbing his head at the mention of the Semitics. Fedra thinks perhaps

### *Further Examples of Book Tests*

he does not like them much.' This is rather amusing, as one may suppose the communicator was vainly endeavouring to check Feda's use of the word 'Semitics,' and persuade her to substitute 'Semites.' He tells me that he cannot always notice when Feda makes a mistake, and so it goes uncorrected, while at other times he suffers a mistake to pass rather than create a confusion in her mind which would spoil the whole message. It is particularly difficult to transmit to her a proper name in which she derives little assistance from the context.

I add yet one more of the many references given from this book. It is not, perhaps, strongly evidential, but suggestive of the way in which certain words present to the communicator *feelings* rather than exact ideas.

'On page 121, there is a reference to something bitter or caustic; he gets the spirit of the word rather than the letters.'

And there followed an effort to get the word 'guillotine,' but Feda could do no better than 'Calethene.' The reference to something caustic proved to be the following: 'Napoleon was one day driving through the streets of Paris amid cheering crowds. One of his suite remarked to him that it must be gratifying to see how his subjects loved him. "Bah!" said the Emperor. "The same rabble would cheer me just as madly if I were going to the guillotine."'

## *Further Examples of Book Tests*

### III

‘In the book-case nearest the door in your study, third shelf up, and sixth book from left. Page 43 is full of matter that appeals to your father, but he gets the idea from it of discussion and controversy. There is a feeling of Biblical subjects with this book, yet treated of and viewed in a cool, cold way. Many parts of it gave him the idea of a summing up, and a good deal to do with Biblical subjects.’

All these books had been changed about since the previous sitting. This was a volume of Gibbon’s *Roman Empire*, and the page was concerned with seventh century disputes about the person of Christ—subject-matter which would certainly have appealed to my father. Also, it is here treated wholly as a description of the controversies of the Church and the attitudes of contending sects. It is given in Gibbon’s characteristically ‘cool, cold way,’ and is inevitably a continual ‘summing up’ of the views of the disputants.

Added to the above description was the following:—

‘Near the top of this page is a reference to the young man who came last time to speak to you here. You will see the direct clue, something very much connected with him.’

It should be explained that at the previous sitting there had been some evidential messages



### *Further Examples of Book Tests*

from a friend whose favourite subject was Greek. Two years previously, on the occasion of my first visit to Mr. Vout-Peters for a demonstration of clairvoyance, this gentleman had been accurately described and termed, 'your Greek friend.' In the present sitting, when the giving of book tests was finished, he spoke again through Feda, and, among other things, reminded me of his devotion to Greek studies. With this in mind I anticipated that on this page there might be found some reference to his favourite subject. There was. The word 'Greek' appeared in the sixth line in the phrase, 'The Greek Clergy.'

I had not read this particular volume. It will be noticed that every point given is correct, and there are six in all, viz.: matter interesting to my father; discussion and controversy; Biblical subjects; treatment in 'cool, cold way'; summing up; reference to Greek near top of page.

#### IV

After indicating a certain book-shelf in my study by reference to the pictures near it, all most accurately described, Feda said:—

'Count from left to right, the third book, and page 87. On this page, and on page 132 also, is something interesting to you and to your father. Page 87 has to do with "hearing," not ordinary hearing with the ear, but as from the spirit world. The words

### *Further Examples of Book Tests*

refer to literal hearing; take them as a message from him about your hearing him now. They suggest communication.'

The book was, *The Early Story of Israel*, by E. L. Thomas, and page 87 contained the legend, 'As they stripped Aaron, a silvery veil of cloud sank over him like a pall and covered him. Aaron seemed to be asleep. Then Moses said, "My brother, what dost thou feel?" "I feel nothing but the cloud that envelops me," answered he. After a little pause Moses said again, "My brother, what dost thou feel?" He answered feebly, "The cloud surrounds me and bereaves me of all joy." And the soul of Aaron was parted from his body. As it went up, Moses cried once more, "Alas, my brother, what dost thou feel?" And the soul replied, "I feel such joy that I would it had come to me sooner."'

Thus both the themes mentioned, literal hearing and communication by the spirit, are found to be present.

Feda continued:—

'Page 132 is a kind of continuation of the above message. A reference to your mediumship, but slightly different from the "hearing."'

It was a description of Gideon, when near the enemy camp, overhearing the telling of a significant dream. Thus in this reference we have communication by *dream*, and in the previous one communication by *voice*. Both methods were of

### *Further Examples of Book Tests*

interest to my father and to me; for some months he had been successful in communicating with me in words through different mediums, and only three nights previously I had three dreams, after each of which I awoke conscious of something unusual about them and the impression accompanying them. These dreams were alluded to and explained at the conclusion of this book message. Thus I had experienced communication by word and by dream, and this book test clearly refers to both methods.

The message continued:—

‘ This book is not like the last one, not so dry. Although not tremendously interesting it is more generally so, more popular.’

‘ The letter “ S ” is on the title-page.’

‘ A picture is near the beginning, not coloured, but black and white.’

‘ Page 3 refers to something which you once studied and were interested in, but afterwards your opinions about it underwent a change.’

All these descriptions proved to be accurate.  
Here were six correct items from one book.

For some time I had been practising what is known as ‘ Inspirational Writing,’ and my father claimed that he was often able to ‘ lift me above

### *Further Examples of Book Tests*

myself' and assist me to some extent, both during such writing and when speaking in public. After the usual explicit directions for finding the book, Feda said:—

'On page 14, and half-way down, there is something you can take as a reference to the fact of his trying to speak through you. Note especially that it is to *the fact* of his trying, because on page 66, near the top, is another reference which you can take as allusion, not this time to the fact, but to *the effect* he wishes to accomplish or lead towards by speaking through you.'

Half-way down the page first given were the words, 'No uninspired writer,' and this seemed to sufficiently harmonise with the claim that my writing and speech had been influenced by his thought. One-third down the other designated page were the words, 'God's will is always done.' To assist in this result would unquestionably be my father's aim in all his work with me, whether in speech or writing.

### VI

A few months after the commencement of book tests one was prefaced by the remark, 'These tests will be subtle, and the more they are looked at the more will they yield.' The book indicated by Feda on this occasion proved to be Kipling's



### *Further Examples of Book Tests*

*Kim*, and the page to which the directions alluded commenced a new chapter with the following lines:—

‘Largesse! Largesse, O Fortune!  
Give or hold at your will.  
If I’ve no care for Fortune,  
Fortune must follow me still!’

To this the following assertions seemed peculiarly applicable:—

‘Rather near the top are important words. They refer to something relating to your life about two years before your first coming here to talk with him through Fedra. It applies strongly to that period.’

My first visit to Mrs. Leonard was on February 3rd, 1917, and two years previous to that date would be February, 1915. We certainly received ‘largesse’ in the financial sense owing to the passing of a relation in that month, and, curiously (whether intended as part of the test or not), the latter two lines exactly hit off subsequent happenings.

Fedra continued:—

‘There is a further test very close; either on the same page or on the next one you will see what may be termed one of your names.’

Upon the page preceding was a description of the meeting after absence of an old man and his son,—

### *Further Examples of Book Tests*

‘The old man’s face lit with pride. “My child,” said he briefly. . . .

They embraced each other, as do father and son in the East.’

From the lips of my communicator, ‘My child,’ is, of course, ‘one of my names.’

‘He wants you to look farther on, page 99, to find a message rather more than half-way down the page, which refers more to himself and will have a bearing upon his earth life, especially the latter part. It is a direct reference to something which you will recognise as pertaining to him. He sensed it by accident while looking for the other; he sensed your name there.’

The bottom paragraph of this page reads: “A blessing on thee.” The lama inclined his solemn head. “I have known many men in my so long life, and disciples not a few. But to none among men . . . has my heart gone out as it has to thee.”’

I was an only son.

### VII

‘The set of books near the door, right-hand corner, bottom shelf, first book, page 2, and about the middle, there find something he wishes you to take as a personal message from him to you.’

### *Further Examples of Book Tests*

In the exact middle of this page was a line beginning, 'Happy, happy, happy,' and this agrees with what my father has frequently described about his present state and surroundings. The whole paragraph reads, 'At the close of the year 1767 the Earl of Buchan died triumphing in the faith of Christ. He had been in the habit of hearing Whitfield, the Wesleys, and others, at Bath, and had felt their ministry a blessing. His last words were, "Happy, happy, happy!"' The relevancy of this is unmistakable.

## CHAPTER V

### HOW FAR MAY CHANCE COINCIDENCE ACCOUNT FOR THE FACTS ?

IN reconsidering book messages after the long interval which has elapsed since they were first verified, I am conscious of the lessened force with which they must inevitably strike the reader who knows at the outset that some sort of success is about to be recorded.

My attitude of mind when receiving these earlier tests, and returning home to search them out, was far otherwise. It seemed so impossible that they should come out right, so incredible that one should have heard from the lips of a comparative stranger, who had never been inside one's house, minute details about books which one could only verify by returning home to search. And even when search had revealed the relevant passage, not only upon the right page, but upon the designated part of that page, it seemed at first too remarkable to be more than a coincidence.

I recollect how, after verifying the first book message received, I tried to find something equally appropriate in the dozen books standing to right and left. But their corresponding pages showed nothing in any way relevant. The test had been correct for the book indicated and for that one only.



### *How far may Coincidence account for the Facts ?*

Time after time, when returning home to search for book messages newly given, it seemed as if past successes must be an unaccountable phenomenon which could not continue. Each time the success was repeated the impression made on my mind deepened. Notes were kept of the failures as carefully as of the successes; both were counted and weighed, and a judgment slowly formed upon consideration of all the facts. This and subsequent chapters will record the method by which alternative explanations were gradually eliminated until the spirit hypothesis alone remained.

It is, of course, impossible to pass on to others the full force of a cumulative impression. Some may airily assume that I was easily satisfied and over willing to be convinced. The experiments, of which the record may easily be read in two hours, were in progress for as many years, during which time each month added to my experience and strengthened my conviction. The most that personal investigators can do is to record their final conclusions, and give some indication of the successive steps by which these have been attained. In seeking an explanation of book tests we shall do well to consider both the normal and the super-normal possibilities, but to try the former first, considering whether familiar causes can satisfactorily account for the facts. It is first of all necessary to discuss the possibility of chance coincidence having played its part, and to form an approximate idea as to how great or how small that part may be. For while the mind

*How far may Coincidence account for the Facts ?*

holds a vague impression that 'a good deal of it is chance,' the full import of book tests will remain unperceived, and some may even argue thus: 'If part of it is coincidence, then probably *all* is simply that and nothing more.'

It is possible that chance may explain some of these tests while failing to explain all. In several instances there have been four or more tests correctly verified from one book; if any one supposes that this might be coincidence let him make trial in his library. I have made experiments establishing the result that, with single words, a good hit may be occasionally obtained, likewise single statements, if not too definite, may be sometimes matched in pages chosen at random; but, with linked statements, we seldom get hits by coincidence, and where a number of tests are to be looked for upon the same page, or upon definitely related pages, the possibility of such coincidence may be disregarded.

In book test No. 3, recorded in Chapter II, the clue given, 'a roaring noise,' is of the kind easily met by chance: had the majority of the tests received been of this character the only safeguard against their having been the result of coincidence would be that their position upon the page was somewhat precisely stated. And it is worthy of note, how, in the majority of instances, this position upon the designated page was found to have been given accurately. It is one thing to look for a reference to a 'heavy roaring noise' upon a certain page, but quite another, and far more difficult, to find

### *How far may Coincidence account for the Facts ?*

such reference haphazard very low on the page; in looking for verifications with the latter modification the likelihood of chance hits is proportionately lessened.

#### SOME FICTITIOUS BOOK TESTS

I have experimented to test the likelihood of chance coincidences. Using the first forty tests received, I tried for each with books *selected at random*, looking for each verification upon *three or more pages*. The result was a decided failure; the exceptions almost invariably relating to single and somewhat vaguely described tests, such as 'a reference to effort,' or 'a reference to colour.' But where in the communicator's tests such generalities as these had been associated with further items, to be found upon the same, or related pages, chance rarely afforded any parallel to the success of the original verification.

The following were among the best *coincidences* in this experiment:—

Book test No. 2, recorded in Chapter III, contains six items:—

'A-sh-ill-ee' . . . 'something about endeavour' . . . 'a word commencing "M" prominent therein' . . . 'a reference to an event in my life of three years before' . . . 'something relating to my wife' . . . 'description of the place where my father and I had lived together.'

*How far may Coincidence account for the Facts ?*

Of these six points a book by Spiller entitled *The Meaning of Marriage* yielded the following three :—

‘A-sh-ill-ee.’ The name Spiller on the cover gives the letters ‘ille’ in correct order.

‘A reference to endeavour, less than half-way down page 87.’ Opening at random upon page 3, there was the following passage near the bottom of the page, ‘We may ungrudgingly pay a well-deserved tribute to the mother cat whose tireless devotion to her young is both touching and heroic. Motherhood already means much in the animal world! Human parents have, however, a far more arduous and time-devouring task to accomplish.’

All this might be taken as reference to ‘effort.’

‘There is a word commencing with “M” which has an important place in it and a bearing upon this message.’

This is fulfilled by ‘Motherhood.’ Coincidence thus scored three consecutive hits. But here it ceased altogether. For with the remaining three items of the test my dippings hither and thither yielded no faintest trace of agreement.

Another rather good coincidence happened on comparing book test No. 4, recorded in Chapter IV, with Vol. II of Martineau’s *Types of Ethical Theory* (3rd edition, Clarendon Press Series).

‘Page 87 has to do with “hearing,”’ etc. Failure.

‘Page 132 is a kind of continuation of the



*How far may Coincidence account for the Facts ?*

above; a reference to your mediumship, but slightly different from "hearing." Alighting by chance upon page 393 I found a few lines about evolution which seemed not wholly irrelevant.

'The letter "S" is on the title-page.' The word 'Series' was in the title.

'Page 3 refers to something which you once studied and were interested in, but afterwards your opinions about it underwent a change.'

On page 3 Martineau mentions Darwin's *Descent of Man*, which, curiously, bears upon the Genesis story of Creation, and this was the theme that verified the original test.

Here there were three coincidences, but no more; the remaining three items of the test were not matched by any correspondence whatever.

In this manner the likelihood of coincidence was proved to be small; for out of the forty book tests in which my father had been correct for thirty-five, chance achieved only fourteen hits, although each test was looked for on *three* different pages in order to give wider scope for the operation of coincidence.

A further investigation upon similar lines showed that where original book tests scored twenty-five successes out of a possible thirty-two, chance yielded but ten, and of these none were strikingly good.

One book test given by my communicator contained six items, four of which were found upon two opposite pages. It is scarcely probable that

*How far may Coincidence account for the Facts ?*

one could light upon any chance parallel to these verifications ; in fact, I have searched twenty casually opened pages without success.

Numerous comparisons of this nature might be adduced indicating how, in *quality*, even more than in number, the tests as originally verified proved superior to those found by chance.

The succession of verifications recorded in Appendix B, where book and title tests are intermingled, presents an instance which one would despair of matching by chance.

But the most satisfactory method by which a wavering judgment might be convinced would probably be the attempt to match the standard of results obtained in the tests recorded in Chapter VIII. There is the evidence of my friend Mr. Bird that notes of these were in his possession before the books were allowed to see the light of day, and he checked the verifications.

In these instances, therefore, the question of my veracity or accuracy need not be considered. Were these verifications attributable to coincidence it should be possible to match them by inspection of books taken haphazard. A trial on these lines might effectively impress upon the unconvinced an idea of the small likelihood of securing equally accurate results by chance.

## CHAPTER VI

### CAN COLLUSION EXPLAIN? EXPERIMENT WITH A SEALED BOOK

We now turn to the question of Trickery. This may seem almost unnecessary in view of the difficulties involved in any supposed attempt to obtain information about my books by means of a confederate in our house. But it is a question occasionally asked, and must therefore be met. Mrs. Leonard has never been in our house, and I am convinced of the perfect fidelity of those living with me.

The question which most interested me at this stage of the experiments was whether, in some inexplicable way, the results depended upon telepathy from my own mind?

This chapter and the two following will record experiments in which I was assisted by my friend, Mr. G. F. Bird of 26 Westmoreland Road, Bromley, Kent. While the primary object of these experiments was to exclude any possibility of telepathy, the conditions under which they were conducted equally precluded collusion, or any kind of trickery.

#### EXPERIMENT WITH A SEALED BOOK

At the time of the experiment now to be described, tests had been given from eight books in our house,

### *Can Collusion Explain ?*

three of which I had not read; but as these had been read by others, it seemed desirable to test with a book which none of us had seen. I therefore arranged with my friend that he should select from his library a book unknown to me, wrap it up and seal it, and allow it to be in my study for a few weeks. This he did in a workman-like manner, placing stout card around it so that it would be impossible for any one to make a rubbing through the paper for the purpose of ascertaining the title, and finally sealing it with private seals. This parcel was brought to me on December 2nd, 1917, and at the next sitting—to which my friend did *not* accompany me, indeed he has never seen Mrs. Leonard—I asked my communicator to select tests from it. Those given below were received on December 13th and 20th. Having typed them in duplicate I took the book to Mr. Bird and handed him a copy of the tests; this he read through, and then proceeded to open the packet and compare the book with my notes. He found the seals and wrappings intact. The book proved to be one which I had read eight years previously, but it is difficult to imagine that this could have influenced the result of the experiment. Herewith are the statements given at the two sittings, together with our findings and my comments.

‘Has not the book string around it? It appears to have it double.’

There was not only string around the outer



### *Experiment with a Sealed Book*

covering, but also a second string around an inner wrapping. It was tied twice. Of course I had seen the string outside, but knew nothing of the further string and wrapper inside.

‘The book seems to be tied peculiarly and wrapped twice.’

The ends of both lots of string were elaborately sealed to the paper. There was an outer paper tied and sealed, then an inner paper similarly tied and sealed. When this was removed it revealed the cardboard surrounding the book.

‘This book is about a subject which would appeal to your father, but about which he has to a certain extent altered his mind.’

The book was *The Supernatural?* by L. A. Weatherly, M.D., and J. N. Maskelyne, published by Arrowsmith, preface dated 1891. The authors very stoutly oppose the idea that departed spirits communicate with human beings, and ridicule the claim that such communications have actually come by means of mediums. My father, who passed on some fourteen years previously, was a Wesleyan minister, and throughout his forty-five years of preaching would have frequently turned his thoughts to the spirit world. But the theological atmosphere of his day would give him little conception of the close relation possible between that world and ours, and his reference to an alteration

### *Can Collusion Explain ?*

of mind after passing over, indicates his discovery of the intimate relations existing between the two worlds, and the possibility of communication. This is again touched on later.

‘ Page 5 refers to something he liked doing when on earth; it is about a third down the page.’

Line 12 speaks of putting a check to superstition, and this is entirely in harmony with my father’s character. But a reference so indefinite would have little evidential value in isolation; it was linked with another.

‘ Also soon after the above there is a reference to a light or fire.’

Near the bottom of the same page is mention of the electric light being installed in the streets of Calcutta. It will be noticed that there are two references to this page, one indefinite and one definite, and that they are found in the order he stated.

Feda then continued,—

‘ You’ll be amused when you see that book.’

More than once Feda remarked that my father was laughing because of this book and its bearing upon himself. Mr. Bird, who knew my father forty years ago, was impressed by this statement,

### *Experiment with a Sealed Book*

and before proceeding to undo the packet remarked that, on the supposition of my father being able to read the book, it would be quite characteristic of him to be amused at the humour of the situation resulting from selection of such a book for purpose of this experiment. Here is a book holding up to derision the assertion that a spirit can enter into communication with earth through a medium. It is from this very book that a spirit is selecting references and transmitting them through a medium,—and he does this for the express purpose of proving that a spirit *can* communicate with men by this method. It must have been a delightful situation, and was evidently appreciated to the full; Feda several times interrupted her remarks to say how much amused he was. No such remarks had been made during tests from the previous eight books selected by him for experiment, and to none of those would they have been in the least degree applicable.

Feda continued,—

‘It was a subject that interested him very much, and one about which he changed his opinion when on earth and has changed it again since passing on.’

‘At its very beginning this book has a strange association for him upon matters that concerned him about twenty years before he passed on. You may have heard about it, or if not, you can verify this by asking your mother. There is a link with that period of nearly twenty years before.’

### *Can Collusion Explain ?*

Eighteen years before his passing in 1903 my father met a lady, a natural medium, whose life had been crowded with remarkable phenomena. She became a personal friend of my parents, and her narrations greatly interested them and were a frequent subject of conversation. At that period, therefore, more than at any other time, matters relating to the spirit world and psychic phenomena were talked of in our family. My mother says that my father must to some extent have changed his opinions after meeting this lady, as they were both convinced of the genuineness of her experiences. The three states of mind alluded to may therefore be termed: early indifference, aroused interest, and, since his passing, realisation. Following up this reference to 'the very beginning of the book,' one finds that its first words are the following quotation from Maudsley, 'If all visions, intuitions, and other modes of communication with the supernatural, accredited now or at any time, have been no more than phenomena of psychology—instances, that is, of sub-normal, super-normal, or abnormal mental function—and if all existing supernatural beliefs are survivals of a state of thought befitting lower stages of human development, the continuance of such beliefs cannot be helpful, it must be hurtful to human progress.' The first words of the contents-table are—'Superstition, Witchcraft, Believers in the Supernatural.' Thus the subject-matter of the book, as expressed at its beginning, took back his thoughts to the time when he first seriously faced the subject of communication with one's

### *Experiment with a Sealed Book*

departed friends. That it *was* a possibility he could not but believe after making the acquaintance of the lady above mentioned. He held an open mind, but did not pursue the subject, and was inclined to share the conventional opinion that the doings of Spiritualism were either fraudulent or wrong. At my first sitting with Mrs. Leonard he remarked, through Feda, referring to the study of communication with friends in the Beyond, that 'when on earth he would have been very wary of it.'

'This book has, near the beginning, a word in handwriting. Either it is written or it is a facsimile. This is unmistakable. Such a definite statement should be a striking bit of proof.'

In the top right-hand corner of the title-page my friend's signature was written in ink. It is the only handwriting in the book. Not all books have the owner's name therein: nor had such an item been mentioned in any previous test.

'There is a page with columns in it.'

This perhaps refers to a picture which faces the title-page. The picture represents a conservatory, the roof of which is supported upon *twenty slender columns*.

'One of the first pages has something in the nature of a diagram; it is more diagram than picture. To Feda it looks like dark lines.'



### *Can Collusion Explain ?*

This was correct. The diagram is upon page 13, which is 'one of the first,' as the book runs on to page 273. It occupies a good half of the page, and consists of four black lines uniting large circles.

At my next sitting, a reference to the success of this experiment led to a conversation upon the subjects of spirit communication and of superstition. Fedra represented my father as strongly emphasising the distinction between the two, and as having become favourable to the former owing to his wider experience since passing over.

Continuing to speak through Fedra, he explained at some length what he meant by superstition, and urged that, just because so many people are merely superstitious, and not scientifically or religiously interested in discovering the real truth about happenings seemingly super-normal, it is better that the truth of spirit communication should not be pressed upon those spiritually or mentally unprepared for it.

Fedra added, 'He has already warned you about the danger of bringing this subject before undesirable people. This book substantiates that. His mind has changed about Spiritualism as a whole, but upon the one point he is stronger than before. It has been misused by some; not only by the foolishly curious, but also by those who took it up for bad ends—Black Magic. Some people have undoubtedly used psychic powers for bad ends. It is like playing with a sharp weapon; they cut themselves badly, but unfortunately they often hurt

### *Experiment with a Sealed Book*

others first. Such people give the whole subject a bad reputation. But used wisely it is a great power for good, as you yourself have already experienced.'

The foregoing remarks, purporting to come from my father, struck me as strongly characteristic of him.

## CHAPTER VII

### EXPERIMENT WITH AN UNSEEN BOOKSHELF

DURING a sitting with Mrs. Leonard on May 31st, 1918, my communicator suggested trying a test with books entirely unknown to me and in some room to which I had no access. At the next sitting, June 21st, I said the plan was excellent, and that I proposed to ask the friend who had previously helped by arranging the 'Sealed Book Test' to name some shelf in his house upon which the experiment might be tried; and I inquired whether, when the shelf had been decided upon, I might mentally inform my father of its whereabouts? The reply came, 'Try to do so; concentrate upon the place agreed on.' It was June 25th when I discussed the matter with my friend, George Frederick Bird, at his house. His study is upstairs, a room I had not seen and of which I then knew nothing. We agreed that he should select a particular shelf in that room and fill it with books which he had himself read; for at this time I considered that books which had been read were easier for my communicator to operate upon. Mr. Bird went to his study and on returning said he had arranged for the test. He drew a sketch of the room, indicating the shelf selected, and wrote the following description to facilitate the attempt

### *Experiment with an Unseen Bookshelf*

to inform my father of its position before next visiting Mrs. Leonard. 'Fred Bird's study immediately opposite the top of the first flight of stairs in his house. The large bookcase on the right-hand side as the door is opened. The fourth shelf from the bottom—not including the two shelves in the cupboard below. The right-hand section of the fourth shelf.'

Six days later I tried to give my father the whereabouts of this shelf, and repeated the endeavour night and morning during four days previously to a sitting on July 5th. Not once during that, or the following sittings, did I say anything as to the locality of the test books beyond the following question: 'Did my father get the message I tried to give him about the position of a shelf we chose for the book test in Fred Bird's house?' The reply was, 'He believed he did; he got it near enough,' and then *immediately* several statements were made, of which the following are examples, our subsequent verifications being appended to each.

Feda's words are placed within quotation marks, and my comments follow.

'The shelf is not near the door, he had to go straight in.'

This is accurate; the door opens on the right, and one is obliged to go straight into the room before turning towards the right, the shelf is then several paces away.

*Experiment with an Unseen Bookshelf*

‘It is in or near a recess; for he felt either a recess or a projection.’

This is true, but I could have guessed as much (although as a matter of fact I gave it no thought) from a study of the plan. The recess is formed by an adjoining bookcase, which, coming at right angles with the one in question, makes a recess measuring 27 inches wide and 12 deep between the two.

‘He feels there is something very hard and shiny close to it, perhaps a sheet of something very smooth and cold, and it seems to be on the right side of it.’

Standing on the floor only three inches from the foot of the bookcase is the footplate of a weighing machine. It is on the right-hand side and, being of painted iron, is ‘very hard and shiny . . . very smooth and cold.’

‘Take the third book from the left. At the beginning of its reading matter, probably on the first page, a bridge is spoken of, and it goes on to allude to water. He is not sure what water, whether sea or river, as he just gets the impression of water.’

‘Not far from the reference to the bridge is an important word commencing with “S,” rather long and peculiar, the name of a person or a place.’

This book proved to be *Hudson’s Bay*, by Ballantyne.



### *Experiment with an Unseen Bookshelf*

Line 16 from the start of the preface reads, ' . . . railway communication will doubtless ere long connect it with Canada on the one hand and the Pacific seaboard on the other. . . . ' The idea expressed as a ' bridge ' might perhaps be the railway bridging the distance between the places named, while ' Pacific seaboard ' sufficiently meets the reference to water.

The above sentence in the book continues, ' . . . while the presence of gold in the Saskatchewan . . . '

' There is a date at the beginning on the first page or fly-leaf. A date that will have a meaning for Fred.' ' On that date Fred did something important, which made a change in his earthly conditions.'

On the fly-leaf was inscribed, ' George Frederick Bird. Xmas, 1877.'

Mr. Bird commenced the New Year by going to his first school, having previously been taught at home.

' He made a journey after or just before which the change took place.'

Quite true, he had been to Llandudno the previous summer, his home at that time being in Lincolnshire.

' On the title-page there is a name or word connected with Fred.'

### *Experiment with an Unseen Bookshelf*

Mr. Bird has made a special study of railway engines, contributing many articles and drawings to technical journals, besides publishing a book upon the subject. We found on this title-page a term often applied to the railway engine, viz., 'The Iron Horse.'

'Another book close thereto suggests Fred's frame of mind respecting these book tests.'

Close to the above stood *The Supernatural?* by Weatherly and Maskelyne, in which they combat the claim that a spirit can communicate information through a medium. This identical volume had been the subject of the recent 'Sealed Book Test.' My friend admitted the suitability and accuracy of this allusion. I may here say that my chief reason for asking his help in these experiments was his keenly critical attitude towards the claims of Psychic Research and Spiritualism.

'One of these books seems to have loose pages, or else something in it which would drop out if opened carelessly; one book.'

The foregoing book had, slipped inside it, a pamphlet and a folded newspaper cutting. It was the only book on the shelf containing any loose matter.

There now followed a description of the height and position of the shelf, and this, upon subsequent inspection, proved correct.

### *Experiment with an Unseen Bookshelf*

Holidays intervened, and it was not till October 8th and 18th that I had the next two sittings which completed the experiment. Meanwhile I had not entered Mr. Bird's study, and he was careful that the experiment-shelf remained untouched. It was only after the whole list of test items had been received, typed, and given to Mr. Bird that I accompanied him to his study, where together we compared the notes with books and room. The following were the most striking results.

'Close to that shelf there is a thing with numbers on it, it is on the wall; numbers like 1-2-3 on it.'

Nine inches from the shelf there is upon the wall a framed picture representing three locomotive engines of different types. Two of them bear figures, 'No 1' and 'No. 251.' The picture was drawn by Mr. Bird, who tells me that he always thinks of these engines as 'Nos. 1, 2, and 3.' At the side of these are three perpendicular columns, each containing fifteen lines of numerals.

'Something close to the books, to one side of them, felt like a small wood shelf.'

A little below the right corner of the shelf is the top of a hanging cupboard upon which stands a shallow box, 27 inches long, serving the purposes of a shelf and with a variety of articles on it. This, not being indicated in the sketch-plan, was unknown to me.

### *Experiment with an Unseen Bookshelf*

‘ In the second book from the right, and on page 2, is a reference to sea or ocean; he is not sure which, because he gets only the idea, and not the words.’

Here we found the line, ‘ A first-rate seaman, grown old between sky and ocean.’ It may have been coincidence that *both* sea and ocean were in the text.

‘ Third book from the right, page 9, there is a reference to journeying, travelling; it seems to be about a third down.’

This was quite correct. The test proceeded:—

‘ Lower down still is a reference to changing of colours.’

Below the foregoing and about two-thirds down the page is the following: ‘ Along the northern horizon the sky suddenly changes from light blue to a dark lead colour.’ A test is the stronger when a second reference is given from one page, as here.

There was a further reference to colour:—

‘ Something in the room close to the shelves seems blue. The eye gets the impression of blue on looking there; it seems to him like a big patch of blue close to the shelf.’

On the next shelf but one below, there stood a set of twenty tall volumes, extending thirty inches, and bound in cloth of a strong mid-blue colour.

### *Experiment with an Unseen Bookshelf*

More striking, however, was the following:—

‘ One book on the shelf near the left end  
has a map.’

63

Among these thirty books there stood, sixth from the left, Winston Churchill's *London to Ladysmith via Pretoria*, and this contains a large folding map. There was no other map on the shelf. Mr. Bird told me he had forgotten the existence of this map until we happened upon it in our search.

To avoid wearying the reader several verifications, similar in character to the foregoing, are omitted.

### CONCLUSION

This experiment indicated that the communicator's ability to perceive books and objects is *entirely independent of the sitter's knowledge or ignorance of the articles.*

However, I wished to ascertain whether Mr. Bird's intimate acquaintance with his own study and books might have been subliminally imparted to me and thence to the medium ?

It is unprofitable to discuss the possibility or impossibility of that which only experiment can decide. We therefore devised and carried out the experiments recorded in the following chapter.



## CHAPTER VIII

### EXPERIMENT WITH AN UNOPENED PARCEL

CONSEQUENT upon the experiment described, it remained to be proved that books could be 'sensed' under circumstances precluding possibility of any human knowledge as to their contents. At the request of my friend, an obliging bookseller gathered together a dozen old volumes without looking at the titles, sending them in a parcel which remained *unopened in Mr. Bird's study*. I received tests therefrom at two sittings with Mrs. Leonard in November and December, 1918. Notes were typed and a copy handed to Mr. Bird before we proceeded to open the parcel, now seen by me for the first time. The following were the most striking of the verifications:—

'One book, he did not locate it properly, so cannot tell which, gave him a feeling of many pictures or diagrams.'

Only one book in all the dozen contained any illustrations, and this one had six whole-page pictures.

'The first book from the left, page 66, near the top, has words which you are to take as from him, expressing what he thinks of the

### *Experiment with an Unopened Parcel*

way you work in studying this subject; they describe very well what you are doing.'

This book was, *The Heart of Humanity*, by S. Hallifax. The first two lines on page 66 read: 'Like the climbers of mountain peaks, as pilgrims in the spiritual world. . . .' My experiences seemed faithfully mirrored in these similes.

'Near the bottom of page 2 there are one or two words, a few, and possibly but one, describing a form of psychic development which he has been, and still is, working with you to obtain.'

In the eighth line from the bottom of the page the word 'inspiration' occurs *twice*. I could scarcely fail to be impressed by the striking reference to *the actual word* which had been frequently used during previous months in connection with my father's attempts to influence me during writing and speaking. At the very sitting where this test was given I had a few minutes before been told, 'You have felt yourself, when speaking, carried above self-consciousness; it is when he is close to you. Now you may find, that, from the start to the end, you are inspired. He could give new interpretations such as he cannot give through Feda, things known there, but not given to earth. So few can be inspired.' I much regret the necessity for personal references, but they are essential parts of the experiment; indeed, their bearing upon my recent endeavours was so cogent that, had there

### *Experiment with an Unopened Parcel*

been no further evidence, I should have been inclined to suspect that my father had succeeded in gaining access to this book.

‘Page 4, and near the top, say about three lines down, has a word giving exactly what he hopes Fred (*i.e.*, Mr. Bird) will gain from his more or less persistent study of the subject.’

The fourth line down commenced with the words, ‘evolution of spirit.’ There was also a further reference to Fred’s state of mind; for the 67th page, ‘near the top,’ was said to give ‘a very good description of his curiosity about the subject.’ Fred was then described as being ‘curious, but in a particular way.’ When I remarked at this point that I thought his interest was aroused, Feda replied, ‘Your father smiles, and says this page puts it neatly.’ The sentence commences at the bottom of the previous page and completes at the top of 67: ‘I could only smile, partly from a sense of humour; for humour is not without its place in spiritual things.’ Humorous curiosity summed up F. B.’s attitude at that date.

### A THREEFOLD DESCRIPTION

Feda continued:—

‘Referring to page 1, something there seems as if about to turn out much more

### *Experiment with an Unopened Parcel*

interesting than it does. You will understand when reading it. The scene at the start seems to take you to one place, and, nearly at the end, is seen to have returned to the same scene again, and to a certain amount also of the same condition. He felt the similarity between the start and the end of the book, while the middle sees other places and conditions altogether.'

Page 1 commences thus: 'The supreme personal factor in the spiritual history of the world is Jesus Christ. . . .' The body of the book then deals at large with the connection between Christianity and theology, paganism, evolution, philosophy, comparative religions, and biology. These subjects correspond to Feda's phrase, 'other places (subjects) and conditions altogether.' But the final paragraph of the book most certainly returns to its initial theme: 'We abandon ourselves to silent communion with Immortal Love personified in that lonely figure upon the Cross, the Cross which was our starting-point and is still our goal. . . .'

'At the end of the book he got a feeling of great expansion, a broadening out of something; this was not the very end, but probably in the part immediately preceding the end. At the very end there was a curious mixture, because, as well as the feeling of expansion he got also a "dropped feeling," a "let-down feeling"; he got this almost simultaneously with the previous sense of expansion; they came nearly together, but seem so contradictory.'

### *Experiment with an Unopened Parcel*

This was correct. The concluding paragraphs of the book strike a note of triumphant joy. But this is immediately followed by a strong reference to the world's pain and heart-break.

The full relevancy of this threefold description could be conveyed adequately only by longer quotations. It is a correspondence unlikely to happen by chance, inasmuch as it consists of three closely related features.

Then came the following:—

‘Is there a time-table among these books? This is not an idle question. You will understand that there is an object in asking it when you see them.’

There was a book of devotion containing a separate page for each day in the year and also one for each Saint's Day. It is just possible the test was intended to connect with this.

Several other references were accurate, although scarcely worth presenting to the reader. They add little to the general impression, yet increase the proportion of moderate successes.

### EXPERIMENT WITH AN IRON BOX

We now desired to vary the experiment. Mr. Bird obtained another set of books as before, and taking them into a dark room, removed the paper



*Experiment with an Unopened Parcel*

wrappings and placed them in an iron deed-box, which, after having fastened and sealed, he left in my study. From this box tests were given at two subsequent sittings. Among our verifications were the following:—

‘ Under the title of the second book from the left there seem to be several horizontal lines, not one merely, but several.’

This book was *The Poetical Works of Crabbe*. While none of the others had more than four horizontal lines beneath the title, this book had nine separate lines and also a number of scrolls making lines of sorts. Here was a definite statement which proved entirely accurate. Again:—

‘ On one of the fly-leaves is a mark looking like a little imperfection.’

The above book had two fly-leaves, and on the first of these was evidence of rough treatment, two conspicuous creasings in the paper and some dark crayon marks. None of the other books had any imperfection on the fly-leaf.

‘ On title-page is a word suggesting wood or boards.’

This suggestion was not contained in a word, but in a picture depicting a rough seat formed of three boards fixed beneath a tree, while close by

### *Experiment with an Unopened Parcel*

there lay a fallen tree. Both wood and boards were therefore in some sense indicated on the title-page. My communicator had more than once remarked that he found it difficult to tell whether his impressions came from words or pictures, as both made much the same impression, unless he were doing it clairvoyantly, a method which at this stage seemed much more difficult and less certain than 'sensing.'

'At bottom of page 5 he thought he saw a word like "development."'

Here was an attempt to employ the clairvoyant method, which partially succeeded; for less than two inches from the bottom was the word 'developed.'

'Page 96, near the top, gave the feeling of eating and drinking. This was very strong, and he would like in due course to hear if he is correct in this.'

He was quite correct. One inch from the top of the ninety-sixth page the following passage commenced:—

'These Roman souls, like Rome's great sons,  
are known  
To live in cells on labours of their own.  
Thus Milo, could we see the noble chief,  
Feeds, for his country's good, on legs of beef;

### *Experiment with an Unopened Parcel*

Camillus copies deeds for sordid pay,  
Yet fights the public battles twice a day.  
E'en now the godlike Brutus views his score  
Scroll'd on the bar-board swinging by the door;  
Where, tippling punch, grave Cato's self you'll  
see,  
And Amor Patriæ vending smuggled tea.'

It will be admitted that tippling punch and feeding on beef sufficiently verifies the test. Here, then, were five correspondences from one book. This cannot be explained by chance, for the probabilities against such a *series* of coincidences are enormous.

### CONCLUSION

Both this and the previous experiment were designed to show whether or not information could be obtained which was outside the knowledge of any person, or persons, living on earth. These books were lent by a stranger, who gathered them haphazard from certain of his shelves without glancing at their titles. They were not seen by us until we met to compare them with the notes of my sittings. The special interest in these two experiments is that they indicate my communicator's success in obtaining and transmitting information under circumstances leaving *no room for telepathy* from the sitter, the friend who assisted me, the bookseller who lent the books, or any other person on earth.

## *Experiment with an Unopened Parcel*

### *Note upon Chapters VI-VIII*

There are points about the foregoing experiments which should be noted.

1. They do not stand upon my single testimony; I had the co-operation of a friend who was entirely sceptical, and who was determined that there should be no room for leakage of information through normal channels.

Mr. G. F. Bird<sup>1</sup> will vouch for his success in this precaution.

2. In not one of these four experiments was I aware of the books chosen, while Mr. Bird was equally unaware in the two latter experiments.

3. We believe that not even the bookseller, who loaned the books in two instances, was aware of their titles, much less of the precise order in which they stood.

4. In the first and last experiments the books were placed in my study, while in the second and third they remained in Mr. Bird's study, to which I had no access.

*These four experiments seemed sufficient demonstration that there was continued success even under circumstances precluding possibility of trickery or collusion, They also showed that telepathy from the sitter or his friends could not be invoked as an explanation.*

<sup>1</sup> Address given on page 49.

## CHAPTER IX

### CAN BOOK TESTS BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE MEDIUM'S SUPER-NORMAL POWERS?

THE authorship of the book tests described in the previous chapters has to be accounted for. It will properly be asked whether there are any known faculties of the human mind by which their production might be explained?

At this point it will be well to consider what powers *must necessarily have been employed* in producing the results described; readers may then more easily estimate the probability, or otherwise, of such powers having been possessed and exercised by Mrs. Leonard.

We shall find that, for the correct giving of the simpler book tests, three unusual, but not entirely unknown, powers or faculties are requisite; while, for the 'personal' book tests, two more would seem to have been called into action, faculties which in our present stage of knowledge it is difficult to think of as existing in any human mind.

#### I

*Such degree of clairvoyance as would permit the making of minute observations in distant places and retaining memory of things there seen.*



### *Can Book Tests be attributed*

This is often termed 'Travelling Clairvoyance,' to distinguish it from the clairvoyance by which is acquired a knowledge of things near the percipient, but not observable by any of the five senses.

Clairvoyance has been defined as, 'The transcendental perception by certain individuals of an object or writing which cannot be seen by, and is unknown to, those present.' Many instances are recorded in a paper by Mrs. H. Sidgwick, entitled, 'The Evidence for Clairvoyance' (*Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, Vol. VII, pp. 30-99; 356-69), and among them are two specially noteworthy cases of 'clairvoyant travel' (pp. 49-52; 58-61).

Myers's *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*<sup>1</sup> contains references to this 'travelling':

(Vol. I., p. 232).—'As we proceed further, we shall see, I think, in many ways how needful is this *excursive* theory to explain *many* telepathic and *all* telæsthetic experiences; many, I mean, of the cases where two minds are in communication, and *all* the cases where the percipient learns material facts with which no other known mind is concerned.'

It seems clear from the last sentence quoted that, had Myers been familiar with our phenomenon of book test messages, he would have examined, as we are now doing, the possibility of its being

<sup>1</sup> Longmans, Green & Co., 1903.

*to the Medium's Super-normal Powers ?*

accounted for by the 'travelling clairvoyance' of the medium through whom they are given.

He comments upon certain instances thus:—

(Vol. I., p. 279).—'In these experiments there seems to be an independent power of visiting almost any desired place, its position having been perhaps first explained by reference to some landmark already known. The clairvoyante will frequently miss her way, and describe houses and scenes adjacent to those desired. Then if she almost literally gets on the scent—if she finds some place which the man whom she is sent to seek has some time traversed—she follows up his track with greater ease, apparently recognising past events in his life as well as present circumstances. The process often reminds one of the dog who, if let loose far from home, will find his way homewards vaguely at first, and using we do not quite know what instinct; then if he once gets on the scent, will hold it easily across much of confusion and obstacle.'

Attention will have been arrested by the above suggestion that in such 'travels' the clairvoyante may be able to recognise *past events* as well as present circumstances. To realise what was in Mr. Myers's thought when penning this sentence one should read the several incidents to which he is referring; it will then be understood that they contain little or nothing of the range of survey over

### *Can Book Tests be attributed*

past events to which book tests have introduced us. The most apposite of the instances related by Myers concerns a missing sleeve-link, and the clairvoyante appears to have described how a child had taken it some days previously, and then to have followed this child's actions in removing it from one place to another—events closely connected with the object of the search and only a few days old. There is nothing in this to parallel the references to memories of many years ago such as have been given with several book tests.

Mrs. Leonard has recounted one experience of what seemed to be clairvoyant travel. It came without being sought, was clearly remembered, and proved to have been a glimpse of what was actually taking place elsewhere.

With creditably attested instances of 'travelling clairvoyance' before us, and learning that Mrs. Leonard has at least on one occasion had a similar experience when she was apparently not in trance, we are logically compelled to inquire whether it might be possible for Mrs. Leonard to have visited her sitters' homes clairvoyantly and culled information from their books.

The first difficulty in accepting this supposition is not insurmountable; it relates to the fact that on every occasion known to me the book tests have been selected from *closed volumes*, and not from books left open at the page from which tests were chosen. Whoever searched for the appropriate passages did so while the books were standing in their shelves. Is it possible that these books

*to the Medium's Super-normal Powers?*

were read while closed and the page consequently in darkness?

2 AND 3

*Ability to extract the general meaning from printed pages in distant houses.*

*And to do this despite the fact that the books concerned are not open at the time.*

In Mrs. Sidgwick's above-mentioned paper on Clairvoyance (*Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. VII., pp. 366, 368-9), there is recorded an incident of peculiar interest in this connection. The percipient during 'excursive clairvoyance' was with some difficulty successful in deciphering upon a corner house the name of a street where was then happening an event which he described. The locality 'seen' was more than seventy miles distant, but the name Skomagerstræde and other details were subsequently found to have been correct. As none of this information was within reach of the auditors, it looks like an instance of reading at a distance.

Sir William Barrett, F.R.S., in his book, *Psychical Research*,<sup>1</sup> entitles a chapter, 'Super-normal Perception; Seeing without Eyes,' and concludes that the reputed evidence on behalf of 'travelling clairvoyance' is more widespread and more ancient than that for telepathy. After discussing the problem presented by the 'Divining—or Dowsing-Rod,' he says:—

<sup>1</sup> Published by Williams & Norgate in the Home University Library.

*Can Book Tests be attributed*

(P. 184).—‘There is, therefore, very strong presumptive evidence that a good dowser is one who possesses a super-normal perceptive power, seeing, as it were, without eyes. Like other super-normal faculties it resides in the subliminal self, and usually reveals itself through some involuntary muscular action. Possibly a like faculty of discernment beyond the power of vision may exist in certain animals and birds, and afford an explanation of the mystery of many otherwise inexplicable cases of homing and migratory instincts.’

His comprehensive Report upon Dowsing (*Proc. S.P.R.*, Vol. XV.), concludes with the statement:—

(P. 314).—‘This subconscious perceptive power, commonly called ‘clairvoyance,’ may provisionally be taken as the explanation of those successes of the dowser which are inexplicable on any grounds at present known to science.’

The Report has also an Appendix, entitled, ‘Evidence of Clairvoyance in Dowsters,’ which is pertinent to our inquiry.

From the early days of mesmeric and hypnotic experiment it has been claimed that, under certain conditions, reading is possible without the use of eyes. Sir William Barrett, in the above, makes the following reference to a Report published in the year 1831:—



*to the Medium's Super-normal Powers ?*

(P. 309).—‘ Those who on *a priori* grounds deny the possibility of any such transcendental perceptive power should read the conclusions unanimously arrived at by the nine distinguished members of the French Royal Academy of Medicine, who were appointed by the Academy to report on mesmeric phenomena. After five years’ investigation this Committee presented their lengthy Report to the Academy in June, 1831. They state they began the inquiry with “inexperience, impatience, and distrust,” which at first militated against them. Ultimately, after the most rigorous tests, they “conclude with certainty” that the faculty which has been designated clairvoyance does really exist in certain subjects in the mesmeric state.’

The book referred to is *Report of the Experiments on Animal Magnetism made by a Committee of the Medical Section of the French Royal Academy of Sciences ; read at the meetings of 21st and 28th of June, 1831.*<sup>1</sup>

This Committee states (p. 198):—

‘ We have seen two somnambulists who distinguished, with their eyes closed, the objects which were placed before them; they mentioned the colour and the value of cards, without touching them; they read

<sup>1</sup> Translated by J. C. Colquhoun, Esq. Published by Robert Cadell, Edinburgh, 1833.

*Can Book Tests be attributed*

words traced with the hand, as also some lines of books opened at random. This phenomenon took place even when the eyelids were kept exactly closed with the fingers.' . . .

'Signed by Bourdois de la Motte, President; Fouquier, Gueneau de Mussy, Guersent, Husson, Itard, J. J. Leroux, Marc, Thillaye.'

In the Appendix of the same book is an account of experiments communicated originally by M. Despine, then Principal Physician to the establishment at Aix (p. 223-4):—

'Not only did our patient hear with the palm of the hand, but we saw her read without the assistance of the eyes, by means of the extremities of the fingers alone, which she moved with rapidity above the page she wished to read, and without touching it, as if to multiply the sentient surfaces;—she read, I say, a whole page of Madame Montolieu's romance, entitled *Les Chateaux en Suisse*. In the page there were three proper names, of which she probably had never heard. . . . During all the experiments, a screen of thick pasteboard intercepted, in the strictest manner, every visual ray which might otherwise have reached her eyes.'

Again from the same Appendix (p. 224):—

*to the Medium's Super-normal Powers?*

' Doctor Delpit, in a curious memoir on two nervous affections, inserted in the *Bibliothèque Medicale*, has recorded a case very similar to that observed by Dr. Despine.

" One of the patients read very distinctly when her eyes were entirely closed to the light, by conducting her fingers over the letters. I made her read in this way, whether by daylight or in the most profound darkness, printed characters, by opening the first book which came to my hand. . . . Was it the sense of touch which supplied that of sight? I know not; but I affirm that she read quite fluently by conducting her fingers along the letters."'

Other instances of seeing without eyes are found in a well-attested book published in 1876, entitled,  $X+Y=Z$ , which is favourably alluded to and drawn upon for illustrations by both Myers and Barrett (see *Human Personality*, Vol. II., pp. 217, 562. *Psychical Research*, p. 161).

Turning to recent records we may note the following:—

The Rector of the Dijon Academy, M. Emile Boirac, in his book *Psychic Science*<sup>1</sup> (pp. 265–8), describes how a man with whom he experimented was able, when under hypnotism, to read correctly by passing his finger tips over the paper while his eyes remained securely bandaged. The impression received by the hypnotised man was not at first

<sup>1</sup> English translation. Published by Rider & Son, 1918.

### *Can Book Tests be attributed*

that of sight, but rather of finding in his mind the impression that the words *ought to be* this or that. Later, however, this impression passed into something closely analogous to sight, although the subject asserted that he was neither reading nor seeing, but *somehow divining by a kind of mental intuition*, yet the result was exactly the same as if he had seen with his eyes.

On page 272 M. Boirac describes a further experiment, in which the subject succeeded in reading *in the dark* some writing of which those in the room were ignorant, and which, therefore, could not have been passed into his mind telepathically from those around him.

Pages 271-4 give an account of experiments with the same person, which showed that he was not dependent upon actual touch, but could read equally well if M. Boirac's fingers touched the page, while he, *i.e.* the hypnotised man, grasped Boirac, whose eyes remained closed meanwhile, by the elbow. This was in some sense reading in the dark, and at a short distance, but depended upon a line of contact, which was in this case M. Boirac's body.

Can we venture to suppose a great extension of this faculty in Mrs. Leonard, and picture her as able to travel clairvoyantly along a line of contact provided by the sitter's close connection with the room in which his books are found? Can we suppose that, in her case, the power of reading in the dark, and at the other end of this hypothetical line of contact, is sufficiently heightened to enable her to peruse at will books standing in their shelves?

*to the Medium's Super-normal Powers ?*

In the experiments of M. Boirac the book was open; can closed books be read ?

Personally I have had no opportunity for observing this type of clairvoyance, under either normal or hypnotic conditions. But it is unnecessary for the purposes of our argument that we should register any opinion as to the accuracy or otherwise of such records; it will suffice for the moment that we imagine some such faculties to exist, and then consider whether their possession by Mrs. Leonard would account for the book test phenomenon as we have seen it.

Before trying to meet this question, it is well to realise that, in case we find that these powers would sufficiently account for Mrs. Leonard's book tests, *we do not thereby disprove* the assertion that they are the result of spirit agency. It would be exceedingly difficult to disprove the presence and assistance of spirit helpers in cases of so called 'reading clairvoyance.' And even were it possible to prove that a sensitive had accomplished such reading unaided, we may reasonably suppose that a spirit operator would possess similar powers in an even higher degree. Indeed there are cases on record which seem to establish this, notably those observed by Sir William Crookes and Stainton Moses, which are recorded in Appendix A.

Thus, even should we decide that Mrs. Leonard might possibly read the books, we have not proved that a spirit did not actually do the reading.

Yet we should in some measure be advanced in our inquiry could we ascertain that the feat was



### *Can Book Tests be attributed*

anywhere within human limits to accomplish. And so we will assume for the moment that our medium can not only travel clairvoyantly, but on arrival at her destination can, like Boirac's subject under hypnotism, read in the dark, which of course it would be necessary to do in order to get at the sense of closed books.

At once we are brought up against the puzzling fact that whereas Boirac's subject and other clairvoyants are said to have read verbatim, our book messages give every sign of *not* having been so read. Could the page be clearly seen, one would certainly expect its number to be given always as printed, in which case we should often have been saved the necessity of counting from the commencement of the reading matter. Why should the communicator laboriously *estimate* the number of the page if it could be clearly *read* by clairvoyant vision ?

One of the complaints of critics has been that only the gist of the passage is given, sometimes only an allusive reference to its general tenour, instead of straight forward quotation. It has been rare indeed to receive the statement that a definite and precise word would be found on the page designated, and never, so far as I am aware, has *an exact quotation* been given. We even seem to see in this inability to read the actual words, of which the general import is, however, discerned, an instance in which a spirit communicator is at a disadvantage as compared with a human clairvoyant reader.

A more serious objection appears when we ask

*to the Medium's Super-normal Powers ?*

whether the faculties which, for the sake of our argument, we have supposed Mrs. Leonard to possess, would suffice to account for the success recorded in obtaining book tests from that room in Mr. Bird's house (see Chapter VII), which I had never seen, and about the position of which, as well as of the shelf selected by Mr. Bird for the experiment, I had only verbal descriptions. In trying to transmit these directions to the unseen communicator, was I actually informing Mrs. Leonard, either the normal or the subliminal Mrs. Leonard, who was forty miles distant at the time ? There was no apparent clue or connecting link by which Mrs. Leonard's clairvoyant vision could have been guided to this particular room and shelf.

Leaving unsolved these three inconsistencies with our suggested hypothesis, let us pass on to the question of the 'personal' book messages, and see if it is possible to conceive these being obtained by Mrs. Leonard herself. Their unique feature consists in a linking of the passages in the book with some event, remote or recent, in the life of the sitter or his home circle.

4

*Ability to obtain knowledge of happenings in the sitter's home and private life relating both to the present and to the distant past.*

If these 'personal' book messages are composed by Mrs. Leonard, we at once add to her

### *Can Book Tests be attributed*

already considerable list of assumed powers ; for she must be able to obtain information from her sitter's house, and also from his memories of long ago.

It may be granted that a clairvoyance which enabled her to obtain passages from our books would also enable her to notice happenings in our house; but where events of distant date are mentioned in conjunction with book-passages, it seems necessary to suppose that she has explored our *memories* to discover them. And if so? Well, we are faced by the further necessity of supposing in her the existence of something more, viz.:—

### 5

*An Intelligence which knows how to select from among our hosts of memories the suitable items for association with the book-passage, or conversely, of finding a suitable passage for the particular memory fished from the deeps of our mind.*

The memories employed are in most instances clear-cut and exact, and they are ingeniously brought into association with the text. How?

If such a power of fishing in two unknown seas, and being able to place the separate catches in appropriate pairs—one from our mind with one from our books—if such a power were *proved* to exist in a medium, we might reasonably regard it as an alternative explanation of the phenomena of book tests. I say alternative, because as previously

*to the Medium's Super-normal Powers ?*

remarked, it must not be overlooked that *even were human faculties found equal to the task*, this would not disprove the spirit origin of the messages. At best we should have shown that, under favourable circumstances, a human being could do what, presumably, was equally within the range of a spirit to accomplish. But in that event the onus of proof would obviously be thrown upon those who asserted the spirit origin of these book tests, and we should be obliged to offer other evidence than book tests which, on our *imaginary assumptions*, we are supposing might be accounted for by a rare combination of human powers.

Such further evidence is already to hand in the phenomena called 'Newspaper tests,' which have appeared subsequently to the book tests, and of which the latter portion of this volume treats. But while reinforcement of proof is always desirable for important truths, I venture to think that a study of the above argument will make unavoidable the conclusion that there is no justification for suggesting that we have glimpsed *any known human powers* whereby we may account for book tests such as are here recorded.

## CHAPTER X

### INDICATIONS OF IDENTITY

THE assurance that the communicator is my father rests upon a mass of evidence to which book tests have contributed but a minute proportion. Yet it may be convenient to gather together in this chapter such stray items as book tests afford.

Readers will have noticed the hints of identity contained in the references to 'Toddington (see Chapter III).'

Such hints receive further support when we consider the *character* of the tests purporting to be given by my father. No fewer than twenty related accurately to circumstances of my life. Others, to the number of ten, related to matters in my father's life. One would have difficulty in imagining these to have been the work of a stranger.

In many instances the tests reveal a theological and religious bent of mind. This is not wholly explained by the fact that the books operated upon were in the library of a minister; for whereas in my study there are twenty-six bookshelves, only eight of these contain Biblical, religious, and sermonic literature, yet it is from these shelves that the great majority of tests were taken.

Among books which came to me from my



## *Indications of Identity*

father's library are four volumes of Pressensé's *Early Years of Christianity*; from these no fewer than fifteen tests were given, thirteen of them being from one volume. From no other book were so many tests given.<sup>1</sup> Including these, there were altogether twenty-eight tests from books on religious history, and only nine from secular histories. From Biblical Commentaries, ten; from books on religious origins and sociology, fourteen; while from books on Biblical studies, religious essays, sermons and devotional literature there were no fewer than fifty-eight, not including references to titles. Thus out of a total of 209 references, not including title tests or the experiments asked for by us, no fewer than 110 were selected from books dealing with some phase of religion. This indication of my communicator's trend of mind is not without its significance.

From my numerous scientific volumes only two tests were given; my father used to evince but slight interest in such studies. I have seven shelves containing books which I especially value, and to which I frequently refer, yet never once has a test been taken from these. And I incline to think that a possible reason may be that these books are upon subjects which did not appeal to my father during his earth life. Nor did the removing of theological books from one part of the room to

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Barrett asked me to see if this volume contained signs that it had been read by my father. He rarely marked his books, and there are no marks in this volume, but in one of the four he wrote an INDEX, which proves that he used them for reference.

### *Indications of Identity*

another make any difference to my communicator; he still selected from among them.

Once, upon returning from a holiday, during which my study had been cleaned, the book test was prefaced by this inquiry:—

‘Has any one disturbed your study? He thinks they have. The books, although upon the same shelves as before, are all in different positions.’

I found this to be correct. All had been taken out for dusting, and although each shelf contained the same books as before, their order was completely disarranged. On several other occasions I have purposely mingled different sections of the library, so that books upon various subjects stood side by side. It made no apparent difference to the accuracy of the tests, nor did it persuade my communicator to relinquish his evident preference for sermonic literature and theology.

I am a lover of poetry, and should have been inclined to expect that such tests as these would be best discovered among the poets; but my father read little poetry, and always found it difficult to commit passages to memory. Now it is noticeable that he has consistently avoided my fifty-five volumes of poetry, and, with the exception of one slight reference to Milton, has given no tests from them, save from three volumes of Dante, which work he always treasured on account of its having been translated by his father. From those volumes

### *Indications of Identity*

of Dante were given eight tests. On another occasion he indicated the position of other of his father's writings which stood upon my shelves.

Such facts tend towards indication of my communicator's identity, a matter more particularly discussed in the chapters on newspaper tests.

### CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE TESTS

It is clear that whoever obtained these tests did not search the books in the normal manner; for we should have quoted passages verbatim, and our references would have been direct and exact. Picture some one blindfolded, who feels a manuscript for psychometric<sup>1</sup> readings. On placing it to the forehead he might obtain ideas, even a crowd of them, and would proceed to mention some of the strongest. If his gift were of a clairvoyant type, he might give correctly some names and actual words, but for the most part would content himself with mentioning ideas, without stating too exactly how they appeared in the manuscript. On a second trial he might name an entirely different set of ideas without repeating any of the former. For, unless his clairvoyant powers were unusually acute, he could but give what came to him at the moment, being unable to see all its parts at will.

A study of numerous book tests leads to the

<sup>1</sup> For note on Psychometry, see Chapter XIX (pp. 196-200).

## *Indications of Identity*

conclusion that they are based upon ideas perceived, rather than on words visualised.

The account given by my communicator supports this conclusion. It may be summarised thus,—At the date of these tests he was able to see actual words now and again only, as if by a flash of clairvoyant power in its initial stage. He noted each idea which struck him strongly, and calculated the number of the page from which it came. He found that he could not with certainty extract many ideas from any one page, but must be content to take what came, using or discarding it as seemed wisest.

*My conclusion is that the book tests were obtained by a spirit who gleaned impressions psychometrically and obtained an exact glimpse now and again by clairvoyance. This seems to explain the indefinite nature of the allusions.*

But his way of dealing with the ideas obtained offers a further subject for study; for where they bring to him apposite recollections from his earth life he expresses these in a manner giving *a clue to his identity*. It has been queried if book tests may not be the result of a peculiar power of clairvoyance in Mrs. Leonard. But assuming for a moment an hypothesis so slender, although it might serve to suggest how knowledge from books in distant places had been obtained, we are still left with no idea as to how such knowledge is given to sitters in a form inextricably interwoven with memories of their departed friends, the professed communicators. In the reference to ‘twenty years before

### *Indications of Identity*

he passed on' (see Chapter VI, p. 53), there was no meaning for me until I had carefully calculated the years, and thought over my father's whereabouts and surroundings at that period. Now this interweaving of tests with my father's memories is a persistent feature of these communications, and has long since satisfied me as to the identity of the communicator with my father. Here, for example, is a test received at 3.20 p.m. on January 16th, 1920, when I was asked to examine the *Daily Telegraph* for the *following* day, and to notice on the first page, near the top of the second column, the name of the place where I was born.

'He is not sure if it is given as a place name, but the name is there.'

Next day, four lines from the top of that column, was the following advertisement in which 'Victoria' might be either a personal or a place name. *Victoria.—Send by return. Most anxious second message.* I had always thought of my birthplace as Taunton, never as Victoria, but recollected having heard the latter name used in connection with Taunton. So I wrote to my mother asking for particulars. She replied that at the time of my birth they were living close by the Wesleyan church of which father had charge in Taunton, that it was always called Victoria, to distinguish it from the larger church at the farther end of the town; and she added finally that his church was situated in Victoria Street, and that the house



### *Indications of Identity*

where I was born was in Victoria Terrace. Comparatively few persons now living would remember that I was born at Taunton, fewer still would be aware that I was born at Victoria. Yet this is just the kind of fact which my father could not possibly forget. I may add that this advertisement had not appeared in the *Telegraph* of the previous day.

## CHAPTER XI

### SUMMARY OF RESULTS

AT this point it may be interesting to consider figures relating to the book tests received during two years, and to view the result as a whole. Those satisfactorily verified are listed as 'Good,' while a considerable number, which were too vague to be considered successful, yet too nearly approaching accuracy to be listed as 'Failures,' are termed 'Indefinite.' A distinction seems necessary between tests given spontaneously and those which I asked for under special conditions of my own devising. Also the date, January 10th, 1919, must be noted; as it was then, so it was claimed, there commenced an attempt to obtain some of the results by 'a sort of clairvoyance for earthly objects,' instead of relying as previously upon 'sensing.' Again, at a sitting a few weeks later, it was remarked: 'In giving this book test, he wishes to say that he is working on different lines now, using new methods, and seeing what he can do.' It will be noted how inferior were the results obtained by the clairvoyant method. From the fact of its having been adopted and persisted in one may suppose that the communicator considered it was a method which, when perfected, would enable him to give superior evidence. He made it clear that this was an experiment on his part.

## *Summary of Results*

Therefore many of the mistakes in obtaining information, subsequent to the use of this 'clairvoyance,' may be regarded in the light of blunders made by a novice when beginning to exercise a new faculty. My communicator may have considered that, by January, 1919, he had sufficiently demonstrated his power of obtaining information from books, whether these were upon my shelves or elsewhere. The 'Newspaper tests,' which commenced in the autumn of 1919, would seem to be the justification of the clairvoyant method; for in these he often specifically mentions having 'seen' a word, although from the mingled success and failure one may argue that this clairvoyance was not yet sufficiently under control to ensure that its results should be uniformly correct.

The following table summarises the results:—

| <i>First Period.</i>            | Good. | Indefinite. | Failure. | Total. |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------------|----------|--------|
| Book tests given                |       |             |          |        |
| spontaneously                   | 121   | 19          | 16       | 156    |
| <sup>1</sup> Title tests        | 46    | 3           | 0        | 49     |
| Book test experiments asked for | 27    | 13          | 5        | 45     |
| <i>Second Period.</i>           |       |             |          |        |
| Book tests given                |       |             |          |        |
| spontaneously                   | 26    | 7           | 20       | 53     |
| <sup>1</sup> Title tests        | 15    | 1           | 5        | 21     |
| Book test experiments asked for | 7     | 3           | 14       | 24     |
| Totals for the two years        | 242   | 46          | 60       | 348    |

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix B.

## Summary of Results

While, however, it is interesting to know the proportion of success to failure, it is upon the *character of the successes* that final opinion must be based. For when sufficient evidence has been given to demonstrate the action of something beyond human powers, it is not vital to the investigation to know whether this ability is infallible in operation, nor even if it may be capable of frequent exercise. Admitting that information has, *upon any single occasion*, been obtained from books by other means than those known to men, we are faced by a fact which requires not only to be explained, but also to be fitted into its place with the other facts.<sup>1</sup>

### THE ARGUMENT SUMMARISED

Through the lips of a sensitive in trance have been given such references to books as indicated their having been scrutinised by an intelligence. The primary purpose of these efforts was said to be demonstration that spirit people were able to do that for which telepathy from human minds could not account, a demonstration calculated to clarify the evidence already existing for the authorship of their communications. (See Chapters I-IV.)

These book tests are a phenomenon the origin of which demands explanation. What are the

<sup>1</sup> See the reference in Sir William Barrett's Introduction to the use, by Prof. Wm. James, of 'the white crow' argument.

## *Summary of Results*

possible alternatives to spirit action? They are Chance Coincidence, Collusion and Trickery, Telepathy, or Super-normal Faculties exerted by the medium.

In view of the number, quality, and ingenuity of correct test-messages received during the space of two years, Chance Coincidence would appear highly improbable. Prolonged experimental comparison (such as is within the power of any one having leisure and access to a library) yields results so conspicuously inferior as to afford overwhelming presumptive evidence against Chance being responsible for more than a negligible fraction of the tests described in this book. (See Chapter V.)

The numerical preponderance of success over failure also indicates a cause other than Chance.

Collusion and Trickery, or indeed any normal means of acquiring the information, are shown to have played no part in the special tests obtained from the Sealed Packet. (See Chapter VI.)

They are again ruled out, together with Telepathy, by the increasingly stringent tests imposed in connection with the Unseen Bookshelf, the batch of books chosen at random by a stranger, and, finally, by the unseen volumes secured in a Deed Box. The degree of success attained under these conditions excludes Collusion, Trickery, and Telepathy; clearly, then, book tests do not depend upon these, either singly or in combination. (See Chapters VII and VIII.)

There are no known human faculties, normal or



### *Summary of Results*

subliminal, by which the medium could herself have achieved the results. Examination of this alternative, in the light of knowledge available up to date, offers no encouragement for supposing it a possible solution of the problem. (See Chapter IX.)

The preferences revealed in selection of material for these messages show in what direction lay the tastes of the originating intelligence, and this is in harmony with other indications of his identity. (See Chapter X.)

Since neither Collusion, Telepathy, Coincidence, nor known human faculties suffice to account for book tests, what alternative remains but to accept the explanation of the messages themselves, and conclude that the originating cause is a spirit? In this conclusion we are in agreement with many investigators in other departments of psychic research who, commencing with doubts, passed by logical compulsion to a belief in the reality of spirit communication.

Attempts to discredit the *bona fides* of Mrs. Leonard would leave the argument untouched, since it stands unassailably upon the actual words uttered by her and recorded by me at the time. In weighing this class of evidence, it is obvious that one has to consider *what was spoken*, irrespective of the speaker or of prejudices relating to questions of mediumship and methods of research.

It has occasionally happened, when I had outlined the evidence from book tests before persons

### *Summary of Results*

who were curious but unconvinced, that they have replied in effect, 'Well, we cannot explain the messages, but it seems to us that if a spirit could speak he would not wish to trouble about such trifles. Surely he would have greater things to say. This is all too trivial to be what you suppose.'

Lest I should by omission have conveyed an impression that the material displayed forms a chief portion of my father's conversation, I hasten to correct the misapprehension. Evidences have but a minor share in our talks, and we regard them rather in the light of necessary business to which we turn first after our greeting, and get it finished as soon as is consistent with its effective discharge. Yet it requires but small intelligence to perceive what added value these tests contribute to the residue of my communicator's remarks; for he touches upon many things which, in the nature of the case, are far beyond my power to verify—occupations in spirit life, its added powers of mind and body, the nature of the new body itself, first impressions on arrival, and the gradual enlargement of experience, the old friends met in new surroundings, their relation to the earth on the one hand and the future prospect on the other, their more immediate consciousness of God. . . .

Had an account of these matters been addressed to me by an unknown intelligence, even though claiming to come from spirit realms, I should have been in grave uncertainty as to the value one was justified in attaching to the statements. But

### *Summary of Results*

consider how different is the actual position. Each interview affords a portion of evidential matter, and when, subsequent to the sitting, this is discovered to be for the more part accurate, one may presume that the unverifiable portions of the communications are, broadly speaking, accurate also, since they obviously proceed from the same mind. The contents of this book display but a strand or two of the substantial line of evidence which runs through all my father's conversations. He warns me, and indeed it is common knowledge, that the mind of the medium must necessarily exert some influence, adding, as it were, to the general colour scheme a shade or two of its own, as well as influencing the form of words in which his thought finds expression.

It is a wonderful achievement when an ascended spirit, one whose body we saw laid in the grave long years ago, so far succeeds in overcoming the 'tenfold-complicated change' of our respective conditions as to engage in familiar converse. Can we be surprised if limitations and imperfections should appear in the performance? That it should be done in any degree, however imperfectly, is the surpassing wonder of all. That the difficulties and limitations of communication will be yet further lessened by painstaking effort on both sides is my hope and expectation; that they should be wholly overcome I do not anticipate, at least for so long as they may serve some providential purpose.

The appended book test has been reserved for

## Summary of Results

this place where, before we turn to another phase of the subject, it may serve to display in unison my father's views and mine.

### COGITO ERGO SUM

The exact section of my library having been described, Feda proceeded:—

‘The shelf below the top, ninth book from the left; on page 24 and about half-way down are *a few words suggesting something your father hopes you think about his talks with you in these sittings.*’

This book proved to be *Personality*, by Prof. Momerie, and page 24 introduces a new chapter *commencing half-way down*. The position of the words was thus precisely indicated. The first lines were, ‘*Cogito ergo sum,*’ which the author proceeds to translate freely as follows: ‘*It is necessary that I who think should be somewhat. In other words, thought is inconceivable without a thinker; the existence of my thought is inconceivable without the existence of myself to think it.*’ Nothing could more aptly sum up my opinion. The conversations through Feda exhibit *thought* based on my father's earth recollections interwoven with newly acquired information in a manner evidencing present *intelligence*. It is he himself; and suggestions that he is being impersonated by Feda or by Mrs. Leonard

*Summary of Results*

would *fail to meet the facts* which have to be accounted for.

‘ Far off thou art, but ever nigh;  
    I have thee still, and I rejoice;  
    I prosper, circled with thy voice;  
I shall not lose thee tho’ I die.

TENNYSON’S *In Memoriam*.



## CHAPTER XII

### A FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF BOOK TESTS

Being an account of a series of test-messages relating to facts and places unknown to me. Transmitted for the late Hon. Edward Wyndham Tennant.

THE incidents recorded in this chapter will be already familiar to readers of *The Earthen Vessel*. I avail myself of Lady Glenconner's permission to use them here, as they afford confirmation of the foregoing conclusions—conclusions which were based on other facts. In this series of messages there was even less scope for telepathy from minds on earth.

### THE ECCLESIASTICUS TEST

A few days before a sitting with Mrs. Leonard in May, 1918, I had heard the Rev. F. Fielding-Ould lecture at Lady Glenconner's house upon 'The Psychic Experiences of the Saints in the Christian Church.' Early in the sitting references were made to this lecture, after which Feda proceeded to say:—

### *A Further Development of Book Tests*

‘In your study, close to the door and on the lowest shelf behind the door, your books have dark bindings. Take the fourth from the left and turn to page 21. There see what the lecturer you heard recently touched upon. It is near the top of the page.’

I subsequently found that the upper part of the indicated page contained references to the Immortality of the Soul, and kindred doctrines which were quite relevant to the lecture. The book was Vol. II of *Encyclopædia Biblica*, the binding of which is dark green. Both assertions were thus found to be correct. The test continued:—

‘All around this page, before and after, there is strong bearing upon certain conditions of the house where you heard that lecture. If you do not understand fully, it would be worth while communicating with the people there; this will be a double test, because what he says now about the house and people is distinct from the previous test. There is something about the whole book connected with them. Tell them the title, the subject, and date of publication. A strong connection with them exists, a reason for linking it to them.’

The topic of this and several preceding pages proved to be the Book of Ecclesiasticus.

From Lady Glenconner’s reply I learnt the nature of the family interest in this book. From it had already been selected the quotation which was to close the Introduction to the Memoir of

### *A Further Development of Book Tests*

her son, a work upon which his mother was then engaged, and this verse, so perfectly appropriate, had been much in her mind:—

*‘There be of them that have left a name behind them, that their praise might be recorded.’—Ecclesiasticus xlv, 8.*

In her recent book, *The Earthen Vessel*, Lady Glenconner says that this verse and chapter were well known to her son in his earth life, and that, in a recent dream, she had conversed with him and especially alluded to this text; thus the book test message provided an endorsement of her dream.

At a subsequent sitting I asked Feda if Mr. Tennant, called Bim by his family, had arranged this test? She said, ‘Bim chose the topic and your father found it in the book.’ It is certainly a remarkable fact that, among all the volumes in our house, one of the very few which mention Ecclesiasticus should have been singled out; and further, that amidst its 700 pages there should have been chosen, not merely one out of the few dealing with this subject, but, among those few, the particular page which best fulfilled the test. The directions given had been so precise as to include in their scope a paragraph mentioning Chapter XLIV.

I was entirely unaware, until receiving Lady Glenconner’s reply, that she had any interest in the passage selected, and it is important to record here that neither Lady Glenconner nor Mrs. Leonard have ever been in our house.

## *A Further Development of Book Tests*

### AT THE HOUSE IN SCOTLAND

On August 22nd, 1918, I was asked to transmit the following:—

‘Here is another message for them, and this time the book is in Scotland. It will be a good test, since neither you nor this medium have been to the place; so it is evident that anything in the nature of conniving, or aiding and abetting, is out of the question! He thought Scotland would be good because of being at a greater distance. The room is upon what one can only call the ground floor of their Scottish house, a room on the right, and not quite square. As you enter the room, the books are on the wall to the right at a height of three to three and a half feet from the ground.

‘Let them take the fourth volume on the left and open it at page 74; on that page is a passage Bim has chosen as his message.’

For a full account of these verifications see pp. 91–7 of *The Earthen Vessel*, but the following items will give some idea of their cogency.

The above passage proved to contain allusion to Winchester, where Bim had been at school. It also introduced an unusual phrase, ‘living furniture,’ which was one of Bim’s well-recognised terms, using the word ‘furniture’ as it is here used, signifying ‘people.’ It also described a return to haunts of youth and thoughts of bygone

### *A Further Development of Book Tests*

days, which would inevitably apply to Bim when looking out this test in his old home.

‘ At the beginning of the book, on the first page, there is a message for his mother.’

The passage there found reads as follows: ‘ It was a work worthy undertaking, for betwixt the two there was so mutual a knowledge and such friendship, contracted in his youth, as nothing but Death could force a separation; and though their bodies were divided, their affections were not, for Love followed the friend’s fame beyond Death, and the forgetful grave. I have heard Divines say that those virtues that were but sparks upon Earth, become great and glorious flames in Heaven.’

‘ Also within a span, there is a book which—and not the title only, but the whole book—How shall one express it to them? The anniversary of Bim’s death draws near, and this is something to comfort them. The book is a keynote to the life he gained by passing over. The book is full of things that the boy has attained to, realised, since passing over. It is but two or three weeks to the anniversary of his death; therefore this book is very suitable as a whole and not only because of its title.’ (Here I asked if this description would be sufficiently clear.) ‘ They will have no difficulty in seeing what is meant.’

The book proved to be Dante’s *Paradiso*. Would it be possible to name another book so



### *A Further Development of Book Tests*

perfectly answering the description given in the message?

I was also asked to send an assurance from Bim to his brothers of his continued interest in all their pursuits, and to ask that examination should be made of the last book on the same shelf as the foregoing; as he had noticed an apposite passage on its eighth page.

The lines discovered on that page, as I subsequently learnt, were as follows:—

‘ They shall not say I went with heavy heart;  
I love them all, but now I must depart  
As one who goes to try a Mystery. . . .’

‘ And now tears are not mine; I have release  
From all the former and the latter pain;  
Like the mid-sea, I rock in boundless peace,  
Soothed by the charity of the deep sea rain.’

‘ O bronzen pines, evenings of gold and blue,  
Steep mellow slope, brimmed twilit pools below,  
Hushed trees, still vale dissolving in the dew . . .

‘ We have been happy . . .  
Happy now, I go.’

When asked if Bim were present and giving the message himself, Feda replied,—

‘ Bim is not here now, but sends his very best thanks, and says it has especially helped his father.’

## *A Further Development of Book Tests*

Not knowing the address of their home in Scotland, I sent a copy of the notes to Lady Glenconner at her London house. Some days later I received a telegram from Glen saying the book tests had been satisfactorily verified.

### AT THE TOWN HOUSE

Extract from a sitting with Mrs. Leonard, January 10th, 1919:—

‘A book test from Bim for his mother. It is in the drawing-room at No. 34. Books behind the door, but not the side close to the door. Top shelf and eighth book from the left, page 6. On the lower part of the page find something which Bim has been able to do for his mother lately. Your father thinks the above will be good if verified; he himself has not the faintest idea about the actual facts, neither has this medium.’

A second test was added, but owing to the family being out of town at the time, the position of several books was changed before this portion could be verified. Lady Glenconner subsequently wrote, ‘I hasten to say that one of the tests has come rightly. It is the eighth book, counting from the left, top shelf of room side of bookcase. Page 6, a page of contents, reads as follows:—

“Triumph.

“The Dead and Living meet. . . . The record

## *A Further Development of Book Tests*

of one of the most wonderful and mysterious experiences.” ’

### AT WILSFORD MANOR

While sitting with Mrs. Leonard on May 2nd, 1919, I was asked to pass on the following message from Bim to his mother:—

‘ Bim has a book test from Wilsford. It is not in Scotland this time, nor the town house. They are going to Wilsford to-day.’

This was the first time I had heard of Wilsford, and, not knowing the address, posted my letter to the town house.

‘ Bim’s test is in the study at Wilsford, to the right as one goes in. The shelf is about three feet up. Within a span of the third book from the left there is a title suggesting “ tumbling down.” ’

This proved correct; close above the indicated book is a copy of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, containing an illustration by Blake showing the ‘ Fall of Lucifer.’

‘ In the third book from the left, page 29, there is a summary of events interesting to Bim.’

The book was found to be Vol. III of *Shelley’s*

*A Further Development of Book Tests*

*Poetical Works*, published by Chatto & Windus, 1888. Page 29 was headed, 'The Triumph of Life,' and the applicable lines from this poem are given here. They are apposite and beautiful.

' . . . . .

. . . ; so on my sight

*Burst a new vision, never seen before ;*

And the fair shape waned in the coming light,  
As veil by veil the silent splendour drops  
From Lucifer, amid the chrysolite

Of Sun-rise, e'er it tinge the mountain tops.  
And as the presence of that fairest planet  
Although unseen, is felt by one who hopes

That his day's path may end as he began it  
In that star's smile, whose light is like the scent  
Of a jonquil when evening breezes fan it,

. . . . .

So knew I, in that Light's severe excess  
The presence of that shape which on the stream  
Moved, as I moved along the wilderness

More dimly than a day-appearing dream,

. . . . .

A light from heaven. . . .

. . . . .

The new Vision, . . .

. . . and the cold bright car

With solemn speed and stunning music crost

*A Further Development of Book Tests*

The forest, . . . *from some dread War*  
*Triumphantly returning* . . .

. . . . .

Behold a wonder worthy of the rhyme  
Of one who from the lowest depths of hell,  
Through every Paradise, and through all glory

Love led serene, *and who returned to tell*  
. . . the wondrous story,  
How all things are transfigured except Love.'

(In this quotation the words deemed specially appropriate are italicised, and the omissions denoted by dotted lines.)

The total number of references which I was asked to pass on to Lady Glenconner was nineteen. Few, if any, seem to have been entire failures, while no less than fifteen were found by Bim's parents to be strikingly appropriate.





PART II  
NEWSPAPER TESTS



## CHAPTER XIII

### NEWSPAPER TESTS ILLUSTRATED

WE now commence the study of something entirely new among evidences for human survival. As we proceed, it will be advisable to assure ourselves that the facts are neither to be explained by the reading-in of meanings not actually present, nor by chance applicability, nor by opportunities for trickery. Following a method similar to that pursued in discussing book tests, we shall discover indications of a clairvoyance and a prevision not attributable to the medium.

On resuming sittings with Mrs. Leonard after a holiday interval in the early autumn of 1919, I was informed through Feda that a new type of test-message was about to be attempted. Its object was said to be the provision of evidence which would render untenable the supposition that information given at these sittings was limited to the stores of subconscious knowledge possessed by the medium or the sitter.

The following pages place the reader in possession of material upon which to form an opinion as to the success of this new evidence.

The idea is, in brief, to connect the communicator's past memories, or present knowledge, with items which have not been made public, but which

## *Newspaper Tests Illustrated*

will be found in some publication almost immediately to appear. Until verifying the message by inspection of the paper designated the sitter has usually no idea of the form the verification will take. Two streams of knowledge are united in the experiment in a way that excludes the familiar suggestion of telepathic action between human minds.

The name 'Newspaper test' has been chosen because the majority of the references have related to newspapers, although they have occasionally been selected at my request from unpublished magazines. The greater number of those received by me have been chosen from the *Times*.

On Friday, November 7th, 1919, I received for the third time a series of references to items which were to be looked for in the morrow's Press. A copy of these references was posted that evening to the Hon. Secretary for Psychical Research. *Since that date I have unfailingly followed the same procedure.* These copies are retained by the Society, and afford evidence that the information they contain was given on the *day previous* to the issue of the paper to which they severally refer.

We will first consider some comparatively simple examples selected from a sitting of December 19th, 1919; these tests were written down by me at 3.10 p.m. and were to be verified in the *Times* of the following day.

Having been directed to the first page and 'rather more than one-third down column three,' I was asked to look to the left where, almost in a



## *Newspaper Tests Illustrated*

line with that spot, would appear my name and a little above it that of my wife.

On examining that part of the *Times* next day, viz., December 20th, 1919, I saw our names within one inch of each other, my wife's in column one, and my own name, *Charles*, in column two. Both are to the left of the spot named as guiding mark, but two inches below half-way down, which is somewhat lower than indicated. My wife's name is represented in the paper by *Clare*, which is what I habitually call her, it being my favourite variant upon Clara, her true name. 'Clare' appears just a fraction higher than 'Charles,' and this agrees with the test description.

The next assertion was rather curious, and indicated intimate knowledge:—

‘Within an inch of those names you’ll see your wife’s age.’

I discovered this just one inch and five-eighths above our names. The figure appearing there is 51, and would have been correct a fortnight earlier; but a birthday intervening had meanwhile changed the age to 52.

A further test followed:—

‘Close to half-way down column one is your father’s name, but as it is not uncommon, and people may say it is likely to occur by chance, he does not rest this test upon a single name, two of his are mentioned.’

## *Newspaper Tests Illustrated*

Two of his names appear in one notice, first *Thomas*, then two lines lower, *John*. These are but three inches below the middle of column one.

While the positions are not always given with microscopic accuracy, the above were sufficiently correct to enable the names to be easily identified. The five items were found within a space of less than three inches square, although in four different notices. This clustering in groups is a frequent feature of newspaper tests.

The following examples include another test-cluster and an illustration of the intimate knowledge of our house possessed by the communicator. The test-messages are placed between quotation marks, and following each is its verification as discovered in the *Times* for the next day.

Date of sitting, November 26th, 1920, at 6.15 p.m. The number of tests given for verification from the first page of the morrow's *Times* was nine. Result: Correct 6; Inconclusive 1; Failure 2. A selection only is here shown.

‘ In column two, a little lower than half-way down, he thought he saw the name Bernard.’

It is lower than stated, and is the only appearance of this name in the column.

‘ Very close thereto is his name John.’

It is within two inches of ‘ Bernard ’ in the parallel column one.

## *Newspaper Tests Illustrated*

‘Also an aunt on his side who is often with him. All three names are close together.’

Three lines above John is *Marie*; his sister was Mary.

The above three names are all within a space measuring two by three inches. Such references to common names have slight evidential value in isolation, but, linked together as above they gain cumulative force.

‘Near the top of column two is the name of a man whose works in life your father greatly admired. He was a writer, and you have more than one reminder of him among your books at home.’

Two inches down column two is, *the late Thomas*. The reference applies to my grandfather, whose books in my study had been previously alluded to in these tests.

‘There was some uncertainty as to where exactly the following was to be placed, but you will find it somewhere in the top half of column two. It is the name of a lady, a relation, whose portrait you have at home in a conspicuous position. This portrait is not on a wall, but stands in its frame upon a piece of furniture, which Feda feels is made of very dark and highly polished wood, a fine wood and not like oak. Feda thinks the article it stands on is not close to the wall, but is pulled out a little; there are some bars upon it near the photograph, certainly two,

### *Newspaper Tests Illustrated*

and there may be more, but Feda is shown two of them. Also quite close to the photograph there is something white.'

The name of a sister-in-law, Emily, appears in the top half of column two. We keep her framed photograph upon a secretary of highly polished and very dark rosewood, having bars of the same material standing in relief against a curtain of light silk. Within three inches of this photograph I noticed a calendar with figures on a white ground, also within fifteen inches a letter-rack containing paper and envelopes; these sufficiently accounted for 'something white' close to it. Each item of the test was correct, even to the position of the secretary, which stood crossways in a corner, one side being three, and the other fourteen, inches from the wall. There was an unexpected sequel to this test at the next sitting: Feda remarked that my father had noticed, in a room we often used, the face of a cat and 'any one could pick it up'; also that he saw in the same room 'something like a snake.' She added that this snake had to do with something we could see, and that connected with it was 'a cover which could be lifted up.' She was proceeding to say that cat and snake had something to do with each other, when she was checked, and correcting herself, added that she was told to say that they were not connected, but were in the same place. As it seemed doubtful if we could trace these from the description, I inquired whether they were in a book. The reply was given very emphatically:—

## *Newspaper Tests Illustrated*

‘No, not in a book, but *upon* something. They are in the same place, but not to do with each other, and certainly not connected with book tests.’

On reaching home my wife, who had accompanied me to the sitting, drew my attention to the secretary above mentioned. There, almost touching the framed portrait of her sister, stood a pictorial calendar showing a cat prominent in the foreground, while immediately in front of this was a Chinese stamp-box, its lid ornamented with a snake-like dragon in high relief. My wife had thought of this snake on the box as ‘a cover which could be lifted up,’ but had not recollected the cat until, while verifying the snake, the picture arrested her attention. ‘Any one could pick it up,’ as the calendar simply rests against the bars of the secretary.

One may suppose that these objects had been noticed by our communicator while obtaining the photograph test for the previous sitting, and then either forgotten, or designedly held over for this occasion. Mrs. Leonard has never visited our house, and even had she done so it would remain to be explained how it was possible for her to connect this photograph with a name which was to appear in a certain place in the *Times* on the following day.

The next illustrates an intermingling of failure and success. Date of sitting, May 7th, 1920, at 6.20 p.m.

This was one of several sittings specially arranged



### *Newspaper Tests Illustrated*

for a later hour than usual in order to discover if the tests would attain greater accuracy as regards position. We thought there would be less likelihood of the columns being rearranged after this hour, and the communicator said he would take a last glance at them immediately before the sitting began.

The number of tests given for verification from the first page of the morrow's *Times* was seven. Result: Correct 6; Failure 1.

‘Look near the top of column two on the front page for reference to a neighbour living very close to you. Your father senses that there are two names together which would both refer to these neighbours. You will understand.’

Four inches from the top of column two appears *Birds*. A few doors from us reside our friends Mr. and Mrs. Bird. The name appears in conjunction with others in a way which seems to have suggested something which the communicator did not quite succeed in clearly expressing, but at least he was correct in saying there were two names together; the relevant words ran thus: *Wood of ‘Birds-grove.’*

‘Nearly half-way down column two is the name of a man at your Mission. But it struck your father that this name would also apply to some one whom he knew on earth years ago, although not to do with the same family. It reminds him of it.’

## *Newspaper Tests Illustrated*

For some years I have been attached to the staff of the Leysian Mission, City Road, London, and among our oldest workers is a Mr. Mason, formerly resident in the Mission Hostel, and still closely identified with our Sunday School and other activities. Within an inch of half-way down the column appears the name *Mason*: the position was thus foretold with absolute precision. My father knew a minister of this name forty years ago, and for some years we were on terms of unusual intimacy with members of his family.

‘ In column, one and about a quarter down, is your father’s name given in connection with a place he knew very well about twenty years ago.’

Between a quarter and half-way down is the name *John* and one inch above it is *Birkdale*. My father’s name was John, and Birkdale is the name of the only house he ever owned, a house he bought nearly twenty years before, *i.e.* in 1901, when retiring from active work, and in which he resided until his death. None of our family have lived there for many years past.

‘ Just underneath and very close is another place he knew. He sensed it was in the south of England, direct south, a good distance from London. He only lived there a short time; it was one of the places of his shortest residence.’

## *Newspaper Tests Illustrated*

One inch below the above was *Southampton*, and as my father had lived at two places near that town I supposed the indefinite description might be intended to cover the locality. This being much too vague for evidence, I inquired at my next interview if he meant Southampton. The reply was given without hesitation, 'Southampton was not right, Newport was what he intended.' I replied that Newport was not mentioned in the paper, but on returning home discovered a quarter of an inch below Birkdale the name *Newbury*. May we suppose that there was, to clairvoyant vision, sufficient similarity between 'Newbury' and 'Newport,' to give rise to a mistake? For there followed an explanation of the difficulty of seeing clearly the actual words. Passing this as a failure, and taking no note of the subsequent introduction of 'Newport,' because this had been mentioned at previous sittings, there yet remains the assertion that one of my father's briefest residences had been at Newport. This is quite correct, as I found from letters and documents dating before my birth; yet it is a fact of which few people would now be aware, and a reference to available records of our Church would give the impression that he lived at Newport for a much longer period than was actually the case. Such incidental remarks are valuable clues to identity.

'Lower in the column he saw, or rather sensed, a reference to Ramsgate or that locality. But quite close, within an inch of it, was the name of some people your mother

### *Newspaper Tests Illustrated*

will remember well as having been at Ramsgate. In fact she had a reminder of them quite lately from some one she met.'

These three statements proved correct. At the bottom of the column was *Herne Bay*, which is near Ramsgate, and where my father sometimes visited when he had a church at the latter place. In the same line and 'within an inch of it' is seen the name *Joseph*, which at once suggested a ministerial friend, Joseph Silcox, who, after leaving Ramsgate, presently settled at Herne Bay and died there. My mother has frequently met the family since then, and tells me that *twelve days* before this test was given she was hearing about them from their minister.

'Another Ramsgate name is very close also, but this is a name of one still at Ramsgate and in whom your mother would be interested.' Here I inquired whether I knew this person. The reply came, 'Yes, your mother told you about him.'

On referring to the *Times* next day there was no doubt as to this name, which is in the notice coming fourth after the foregoing, although at the top of the second column. May we suppose that it was moved there owing to a few late insertions after these tests were selected. This notice is headed *Preston*. A gentleman of this name is still prominent in Church and Temperance work at Ramsgate, and was well known to my father.

### *Newspaper Tests Illustrated*

My mother had been speaking to me about him *exactly three weeks previously*. It will be noted that the wording of the tests implies knowledge that while the 'Joseph' family is no longer at Ramsgate, Mr. Preston still resides there.

'Near the bottom of column one is your Christian name and also the name Thomas quite close.'

It was so. Three-quarters down column one, and within four lines of each other, appear *Thomas* and *The Rev. Charles*. The general accuracy of position in the above tests deserves notice.

It will be inquired how much of the above was knowledge possessed by Mrs. Leonard? She was normally aware that we had lived at Ramsgate, and that I worked at the Leysian Mission. And during previous trances mention had been made of the name Silcox (in connection with Ramsgate), and Newport (as my mother's old home), also of Fred Bird (as an old friend residing near us at Bromley). But even had Mrs. Leonard been possessed normally of these items, it is not easy to suggest how this could have made possible the above varied assertions relating to the morrow's Press, and indicating familiarity with my father's earth memories.



## CHAPTER XIV

### EXAMINATION OF THE TEST MESSAGES FOR FEBRUARY 14TH, 1920

BEFORE presenting for consideration a somewhat numerous selection of these newspaper tests, it may be advisable to examine somewhat minutely, and in their entirety, those given for a single date. We shall thus gain some idea of the characteristics generally observable in such tests.

Two sketch-plans are added which show at a glance (*a*) the positions in which the names concerned were subsequently found, and (*b*) the result of an attempt to discover how far the forecast might have been due to chance.

The *Times* Office in Queen Victoria Street, London, preserves copies of every issue of the paper, inspection of which is permitted on payment of a small charge.

Tests given 3 p.m., February 13th, 1920, to be verified from the *Times* of the day following.

The following is an extract from my notes of a sitting on this date:—

‘ 1. The first page of the paper, in column two and near the top—(here Feda remarked that she could not quite get my father’s

### *Examination of the Test Messages*

meaning, but after a pause continued)—the name of a minister with whom your father was friendly at Leek.

‘ 2. Lower in this column, say one-quarter down, appear his name, your own, your mother’s, and that of an aunt; all four within the space of two inches.

‘ 3. Near these the word “Grange.”

‘ 4. In column one, not quite half-way down, is your mother’s maiden name or one very like it.

‘ 5. Somewhat above that is named a place where your mother passed some years of her girlhood.

‘ 6. Close to the foregoing is a name which suggests an action which one might make with the body in jumping.

‘ 7. Towards the bottom of column one is named a place where you went to school.

‘ 8. In the vicinity is mentioned a—shall I say a teacher, rather than a schoolmaster—of yours whom you will remember well.

‘ 9. There is a word close by which looks to your father like “Cheadle.”

‘ 10. Higher in column one, say two-thirds down, is a name suggesting ammunition.

‘ 11. Between that and the teacher’s name is a place-name, French, looking like three words hyphenated into one; the first rather long, the last shorter, and one looking like “sur.”

‘ 12. About the middle of this page, the middle both down and across, is a mistake in print; it cannot be right, some wrong letters inserted or something left out, some kind of mistake just there.’

### *Examination of the Test Messages*

It is important to realise that a copy of these notes was made *the same evening*, and posted in London so that it would be delivered early the following morning. It was sent to the Secretary of the Society for Psychical Research in accordance with my invariable custom, a practice adopted many months previously, when I realised that tests from the papers of the day after the sitting were becoming a regular feature of conversations with my father through Mrs. Leonard and Feda.

We will now compare the above with the first page of the *Times* for the day following the sitting, viz., February 14th, 1920. The sketch-plan on the adjoining page is made from the front page of the *Times* for this date, and may assist those who cannot conveniently refer to the newspaper itself, in forming some idea of the general accuracy of the tests as regards their position in the several columns.

I have numbered the tests for convenience in studying their verification.

#### Item 1:—

‘The first page of the paper, in column two and near the top, is the name of a minister with whom your father was friendly at Leek.’

On looking at this portion of the *Times* on the morning of February 14th, I failed to find either Holbrey or Pritchard, who were the only ministers whom I remembered at Leek when we resided there in my early boyhood. I therefore asked my

*Examination of the Test Messages*

THE TIMES

Saturday, February 14, 1920

|                             |   |      |  |  |  |
|-----------------------------|---|------|--|--|--|
|                             |   |      |  |  |  |
|                             | PERKS   |      |  |  |  |
| Hants                       | JOHN<br>Cumnock<br>Emile<br>Sauret<br>Charles |      |  |  |  |
| Dorothea                    | WATTS   |      |  |  |  |
| Canon                       |   | paae |  |  |  |
| Canon                       |   |      |  |  |  |
| Braine-le-<br>Château       |   |      |  |  |  |
| Joseph                      |   |      |  |  |  |
| Joseph<br>Lincoln-<br>shire |   |      |  |  |  |

mother to read down this column and let me know if she found there any familiar ministerial name. She at once drew my attention to the name *Perks*, appearing four inches from the top, informing me that a minister of that name visited Leek on a special occasion, and that my father had much

### *Examination of the Test Messages*

enjoyed his company. With this clue I looked through my father's scrupulously kept diaries and found that in 1873 the Rev. George T. Perks, M.A., then President of the Wesleyan Conference, visited Leek as Foreign Missionary Deputation, and that my father spent most of the day with him at the house of a friend named Stephen Goodwin. An incident of this sort was likely to remain prominent in my father's memory.

The test had proved successful, the name of a minister with whom my father was friendly at Leek appearing near the top of the second column of the first page of the *Times* for the date specified.

One of necessity inquires whether this might not have been a mere coincidence? Either of the three names, Holbrey, Pritchard, or Perks, would have met the test; what then are the chances that one or other of these might appear within a few inches from the top of the second column of the *Times* for any date taken at random? Collecting ten copies of the paper for various dates, I made search, but failed to find a single appearance of either name, although going very carefully through the top quarter of column two in each front page of the whole ten. This negative result tells against coincidence, but the argument against chance will be strengthened as we proceed with the examination.

There arises next the very important question of the medium's knowledge. How much might Mrs. Leonard (or Feda) know about Leek and my father's associations there? Looking up my notes of a sitting three years before (one of my earliest



### *Examination of the Test Messages*

with Mrs. Leonard), I find the following references to Leek. My father was telling me (through Feda) about a minister he had known named Jones. Remembering that he knew at least two of this name, I asked, 'Is it the one who followed us at Leek, or do you allude to your old Chairman of the District?' My question seemed to interest Feda, who found opportunity for remarking that her medium (meaning Mrs. Leonard) had been in Leek. When the sitting ended I verified this, Mrs. Leonard telling me that she had visited Leek in company with her husband some years previously.

Would the incident of Mr. Perks's visit to Leek, at a date before her birth, have been likely to attract the notice of Mrs. Leonard? And if so, could she have been aware that my father spent the day with him, or that he had regarded him as a friend?

I believe, however, that this earlier reference to Leek in connection with my father was largely responsible for the ease with which Feda, on the later occasion, caught the name. Feda's memory is extraordinarily retentive, and I notice that any name once coming into our conversation at a sitting is more easily repeated by her subsequently, and is usually given with more certainty than attends the introduction of fresh names. In the latter case there is nothing in the context to assist Feda, and she is often inaccurate; items 3 and 9 of this sitting, 'Grange' and 'Cheadle,' may have been imperfectly seen by the communicator, alternatively

## *Examination of the Test Messages*

they possibly illustrate Feda's jumping to a conclusion and giving a word familiar to her instead of one the communicator strove to transmit. Have we not sometimes found it difficult to catch a strange name spoken through the telephone, while familiarity has aided us in correctly guessing other names pronounced over the wire with equal indistinctness?

I now continue the discussion.

Item 2:—

'One-quarter down column two is his name, your own, your mother's, and that of an aunt. All are within two inches.'

Let us see what names are required to satisfy this assertion. My father's name was John Drayton and mine is Charles Drayton; therefore we must find either John and Charles, or one of these together with Drayton. My mother is Sarah Jane, so that one or other of these names should appear in the paper. My various aunts are named Emily, Frances Mary, Henrietta, Margaret, Susie, Matilda, and Anne Wesley; such a number certainly provides scope for the chance appearance of a suitable name.

In the second column of the *Times* next morning, and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches below one quarter down, are the names *John* and *Charles*, which meet the first half of the test. Then comes the name *Emile Sauret*, which presumably suggested Emily and Sarah, my aunt and mother. Most significant of all, these four names fall within a space  $1\frac{1}{4}$  by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

As before remarked, so wide a choice of names

### *Examination of the Test Messages*

provides room for coincidence, and yet my search through ten numbers of the *Times* for other dates failed to find more than two of these names in a similar position in any one paper. A glance at the accompanying sketch-plan of tests for coincidence (see page 147) will make this plain. It will there be seen that, in three issues, the names John and Mary were found together, and in three other issues one of the required names appears in approximately the right place. But John and Charles did not happen together once, nor was the name of any aunt, save Mary, discoverable. This favours the assumption that the finding of John, Charles, and Emile Sauret in the place described on the previous day, and within less than the asserted distance of each other, was not a mere coincidence.

Repetition of such tests revealing a knowledge of family names goes far towards proving the identity of my communicator. A number of these will be found in later pages.

Item 3:—

‘Near these the word “Grange.”’

I can discover neither this name nor another sufficiently near it in appearance to account for the idea. Whatever may be the methods used by my communicator, they failed him at this point, unless it was Feda who tripped over the name.

Item 4:—

‘In column one, not quite half-way down,

### *Examination of the Test Messages*

is a name which is your mother's maiden name or one very like it.'

My mother's maiden name was Dore (without the accent). In the *Times* next day I found, exactly one inch short of half-way down the first column, the name *Dorothea*. This is not Dore, yet the first portion is 'very like it,' as the test claimed it would be.

The presence of names commencing Dor—— is frequent in these columns: I found no fewer than six in the corresponding portion of the *Times* when searching ten issues for coincidences. The interest, therefore, of this test lies in the fact that I was asked to look for a name something like the one indirectly indicated (one which I, but not Mrs. Leonard, knew to be Dore), and which was found to commence Dor——. This test points in the direction of my father's recollection of an unusual name which would be indelibly impressed by happy associations upon his memory. This name has been brought into one subsequent test in a connection which revealed a further knowledge of family names such as my father would possess, but of which Mrs. Leonard would know nothing. This was on June 14th, 1920, at 5.40 p.m., when the following was given among several items to be verified from the first page of the next day's *Times*:—

'Near the top of column two is the name of your mother's mother. One of her other

### *Examination of the Test Messages*

names is held by another member in the family."

Wishing to avoid ambiguity, I asked if this referred to my grandmother's Christian name, ANN? The reply given was:—

'No, that is the name in the paper; but one of her other names is held by another in the family, and makes a peculiar combination. This other name, the married one, is to be found a little lower. He does not know if it is given there as a personal name.'

This was correct, for in the *Times* for June 15th, 1920, the name *Ann* appeared two inches from the top of the second column. Now it is difficult to think that Mrs. Leonard could have been aware of this name, the owner of which passed on some twenty-six years previously. The final remark in the test message indicated knowledge that the name in question, namely, Dore, was capable of another use; it is pronounced exactly like the noun 'door.'

Coming now to the assertion that this name occurred in peculiar combination in the names of another member of the family, we find a further evidence of intimate knowledge such as my father would possess, and which the medium certainly would not. My sister's final names were Dore Raw; the name Dore, never having been used save in her legal signature, was little likely to have been known anywhere outside the family circle.



### *Examination of the Test Messages*

Did this name Dore appear in the *Times* next day? No, but within two inches of the above *Ann*, and slightly lower in the adjoining column, I found both *Doris* and *Dorothy*, which commence with the syllable approximating in sound and spelling to Dore.

From this digression we return to—

Item 5:—

‘Somewhat above that is named a place where your mother passed some years of her girlhood.’

This description would scarcely lead one to expect Newport, I.O.W., which was her home, and the only other place applicable would be Shirley, near Southampton, where my mother was at school for two or more years. On searching the paper I found that, four inches above the preceding test-words, *Doris* and *Dorothy*, was *Hants*. This is literally correct, Shirley being in Hampshire. I have noticed that Feda almost invariably uses the term ‘place’ instead of ‘country.’ Careful scrutiny of ten other numbers of the *Times* failed to show any mention of Hampshire in the corresponding part of column one; thus again is support lacking for the suggestion of coincidence.

Item 6:—

‘Close to the foregoing is a name, which suggests an action which one might make with the body in jumping.’

Within three inches of ‘Hants,’ and on a level with it in the adjoining column, is a place-name,

### *Examination of the Test Messages*

*Cumnock*, which seems to have suggested a pun, which, however poor, provoked an involuntary smile when I happened unexpectedly upon it. A knock might come to one as a result of clumsy leaping. How few names would meet the description. Search through the corresponding portions of ten issues of the *Times* failed to reveal a single one which, by any stretch of imagination, could be considered apposite.

Item 7:—

‘Towards the bottom of column one is named a place where you went to school.’

Owing to the frequent removals of our home necessitated by the Wesleyan itinerant system, I was at school in six different towns, and as these were in five counties there are no less than eleven names, any one of which would fulfil this test. Coincidence is therefore probable here, and in my search through ten issues of the *Times*, two names appeared in approximately the required position. There is, therefore, nothing particularly striking in the fact that in the next morning’s *Times* the last line of column one contained *Lincolnshire*, in which county I was at school for three years. As intimated above, a county is alluded to by Feda as ‘a place.’

Item 8:—

‘In the vicinity is mentioned a—shall I say a teacher, rather than a schoolmaster—of yours whom you will remember well.’

### *Examination of the Test Messages*

This distinction between master and teacher hits off the position exactly. At the school I attended before removing to Lincolnshire, the master was named Watts, and his eldest son, Joseph, occasionally helped his father by teaching the juniors. I was a great admirer of Joseph, and those were proud occasions when he came to tea with me. Joseph was not a master, and yet he sometimes taught me. On looking at the part of the column indicated I found the name *Joseph* occurring in the same advertisement with *Lincolnshire*; (but more than this, the name *Watts* appears in the next column, where it may have served, if noticed by my communicator, to connect the name Joseph with this friend of my boyhood). This was another fact of the kind my parents would remember, as my friendships were matter of much importance in their eyes. I find that my mother has very clear-cut recollections of Joseph and my admiration for him.

The name Joseph is commonly found in these columns, indeed it appears again some three inches from the bottom of this column.

Item 9:—

‘There is a word close by which looks to your father like Cheadle.’

I can find nothing of the kind; it seems another case of Feda’s difficulty in transmitting names with which she is unfamiliar.

It will be asked why my communicator does not

### *Examination of the Test Messages*

correct Feda when she gives a wrong name? He tells me that he is much engrossed preparing the next sentence, and is not always aware how Feda is interpreting his message; and even when conscious of a mistake, he may elect to let it pass, rather than risk entire failure through Feda becoming confused. I have known him take control towards the close of a sitting and rectify a point which Feda had failed in giving. Sometimes Feda announces that the word given is not the right one, but the nearest she can get. It will be noticed that this failure is couched in words expressing uncertainty; possibly the error may have been in the mind of the communicator.

#### Item 10:—

‘Higher in column one, say two-thirds down, is a name suggesting ammunition.’

Just where described the ecclesiastical title *Canon* appears twice. This would be well within the range of coincidence, as it is not uncommon in the marriage column. It was found three times in this position during my search for coincidences through ten issues of the paper.

#### Item 11:—

‘Between that and the teacher’s name is a place-name, French, looking like three words hyphenated into one.’

This was a definite test, and proved successful; for I found in the next morning’s paper, and between

### *Examination of the Test Messages*

the two 'Josephs' and the two 'Canons,' notice of a marriage at the Belgian town of Braine-le-Château. A supplementary attempt to describe this name in greater detail failed. The presence of three French words hyphenated into one in a part of the paper so definitely described as to limit it to a space, say, of five inches at most, is rather beyond the likelihood of coincidence. There was no such instance in the ten copies searched.

#### Item 12:—

'About the middle of this page, the middle both down and across, is a mistake in print; it cannot be right. Some wrong letters inserted or something left out, some kind of mistake just there.'

Within three inches of the centre of this page, slightly below half-way down column three, is a short notice in italics of which the final words are, 'on the next page.' The word 'page' is imperfect, the letter 'g' being minus its tail and looking like an awkward 'a,' thus—'paae.' At least it so appeared in my copy, and on inspection of a second copy I notice the same defect. Misprints of this sort must be rare in the *Times*, for I have failed to discover another.

Having considered in detail the test messages given at this sitting, we find that, out of twelve items, only two entirely failed, the others agreeing more or less exactly with the forecast given at



### *Examination of the Test Messages*

3 p.m. on the day previous to the publication of the paper. Could this be coincidence? On the adjacent page is tabulated the result of an attempt to match these tests by chance. It will be seen that although ten issues of the paper were searched, not one of them yielded more than three chance verifications, and the average of success was below two, common names accounting for most of these coincidences.

In order to avoid wearying readers who would not be interested in a further consideration of coincidence, the results of other experiments have been grouped together in the next chapter, where they may be passed over or considered according to choice.

#### ANOTHER REFERENCE TO LEEK

There has been a subsequent reference to Leek, which seems to pass beyond any possibility of coincidence or other normal explanation.

My notes, posted the same evening and now in the possession of the Society for Psychical Research, show that on February 18th, 1921, at 6.8 p.m., I received the following test message, which was to be verified from the *Times* next morning:—

‘About half-way down column one of the first page is the name of one whom you and your sister knew very well when quite young.’

That would take us back more than forty years. How many names would satisfy the conditions of

# Examination of the Test Messages

## TABULATED RESULT OF TESTS FOR COINCIDENCE.

A comparison of the twelve items given at the sitting of February 13th, 1920, for verification in the Times of the day following, with ten issues of the paper for other dates selected at random.

| Item No. | Names Required.                            | 1st paper. | 2nd     | 3rd          | 4th     | 5th          | 6th     | 7th  | 8th | 9th          | 10th    | Total of 10 papers & each item. |
|----------|--|------------|---------|--------------|---------|--------------|---------|------|-----|--------------|---------|---------------------------------|
| 1        | Perks.<br>Holbrey.<br>Pritchard.           |            |         |              |         |              |         |      |     |              |         | 0                               |
| 2        | John.<br>Charles.<br>Emily.<br>Sarah, etc. | Charles    | Charles | John<br>Mary |         | John<br>Mary |         | John |     | John<br>Mary |         | 2½                              |
| 3        | Grange                                     |            |         | Dorothy      | Dorothy | Doris        | Dorothy |      |     | Dorothy      | Dorothy | 6                               |
| 4        | Dore                                       |            |         |              |         |              |         |      |     |              |         | 0                               |
| 5        | Hants                                      |            |         |              |         |              |         |      |     |              |         | 0                               |
| 6        | Cumnock                                    |            |         |              |         |              |         |      |     |              |         | 0                               |
| 7        | Lincolnshire,<br>etc.                      |            | Newport |              |         |              |         |      |     |              | Kent    | 2                               |
| 8        | Joseph                                     | Joseph     | Joseph  |              |         |              |         |      |     |              |         | 2                               |
| 9        | Cheadle                                    |            |         |              |         |              |         |      |     |              |         | 0                               |
| 10       | Canon                                      | Canon      |         |              |         | Canon        |         |      |     |              | Canon   | 3                               |
| 11       | Braine-le-Château etc.                     |            |         |              |         |              |         |      |     |              |         | 0                               |
| 12       | A misprint                                 |            |         |              |         |              |         |      |     |              |         | 0                               |
|          | Total for each paper =                     | 2½         | 2½      | 1½           | 1       | 2½           | 1       | 1    | 0   | 1½           | 3       | =15½                            |

### *Examination of the Test Messages*

this test ? Not many, owing to the fact that coupled with the above came a second portion. Feda prefaced it by remarking that, since many people might say that the presence of the right name there was a coincidence, he would add that—

‘Close to it is a name indicating the place where we used to see this person.’

The chances are now narrowed ; in a definite spot has to appear to-morrow a name familiar to my sister and me more than forty years ago, and close to it, also, must be seen the name of the town where such a person resided.

The friend at Leek, in whose house my father and the Rev. George Perks had spent a day together, was named Stephen Goodwin. He was one of the chief supporters of our Church when my father lived at Leek; I recollect him well, and my sister, although too young at that time, made his acquaintance some years afterwards during visits to that town. On looking at the *Times* for the next day, February 19th, 1921, I noticed the name *Goodwin* in large type, and this was within two inches of half-way down the first column, the exact position described. It may have been a mere coincidence, or it may have been noticed by the communicator, but in a different notice on the line above, and placed immediately over the name Goodwin, was *Stephen*. Thus the name (or names), as well as the position in the column, fit exactly; but the test is enormously strengthened and, as it seems to me, placed beyond any suggestion of coincidence,

### *Examination of the Test Messages*

by the presence, only three inches distant, of the name *Leek*.

In this instance it is difficult to imagine how Mrs. Leonard's knowledge of our connection with Leek could play any part in devising such a test. For even on the groundless supposition that she could be aware of our interest in the name Goodwin, can any one suggest any normal means whereby she might know that the name Leek would appear in close proximity with it? The problem is rendered more complicated by the fact that Leek and Goodwin are *in different columns*, although so close together.

It may be well to state here my opinion of these two Leek tests, inasmuch as it will apply to the whole series, amounting to several hundred, received during the last two years. I see irrefutable evidence of super-normal ability to ascertain knowledge of names which are to appear in the morrow's Press, and, more difficult still, to forecast in what approximate position these names will be found. Were this all, I might be left in some uncertainty as to whether such results might not be accounted for by some unusually high degree of clairvoyant ability in Mrs. Leonard. But any such uncertainty is removed by the consideration that numbers of these tests (of which a selection will be given later) reveal the intimate knowledge of olden happenings which was possessed by my father, and which he would be aware I should be able to verify, either by my own recollections, my mother's assistance, or his private papers.

## CHAPTER XV

### CHANCE COINCIDENCE FAILS TO ACCOUNT FOR THE FACTS

QUERIES as to fraud or collusion would seem to be out of place in an inquiry as to the originating intelligence in newspaper tests. In view of the hour at which the tests are given, and the nature of the knowledge many of them display, we are safe in assuming the inadequacy of this supposition.

It is otherwise with the question of coincidence. Can chance explain? I will indicate reasons for my conviction that it does not.

It happens that most of the family names alluded to in these tests are sufficiently common to be assured of a place in every issue of the *Times*. Unless their position be somewhat definitely stated there will be ample room for coincidence. It will have been observed that their position is usually given within, at least, the margin of one quarter of a column. But even so, with certain common names, and even for the conjunction of two such, there might easily be chance correspondence. Possibly it is on account of this that the communicator usually associates such names with other items; for when three or more statements are linked together, a coincidence, although still possible, is unlikely. And when, over a long series of such



*Chance Coincidence fails to Account for the Facts*

linked tests, verification continues to be steadily maintained, we gradually perceive that the happenings are not by chance. This perception is hastened by the evidence that a considerable range of familiarity with family relationships and events of long ago is at the disposal of the communicator.

Readers can easily take a number of these tests seriatim, and discover how far they will apply to issues of the *Times* for other dates than those for which originally given. The carrying out of such a comparison will do more than argument to prove how small a part is played by chance in producing the results.

I have used the tests received in twelve sittings—104 in number—and compared them with copies of the *Times* taken at random, in order to see what measure of success might be attained by chance. Those are counted as 'inconclusive' which were not failures and yet not wholly exact; sometimes the name required was found too far away from the place indicated, while, at other times, tests have been expressed in a manner too vague to ensure conviction that the word found was the one actually intended by the communicator. Over these 'inconclusive' verifications, whether of the original tests or of the coincidences, scrutineers might differ, some tending to the lenient and others to the severe side. I have endeavoured to apply the same standard both when verifying the original tests and when searching in the *Times* of other dates for chance hits. The results were as follows:—

In the original verification of 104 items,—

### *Chance Coincidence Fails to Account for the Facts*

Successes 73; Inconclusive 12; Failures 19.  
In comparison for chance hits with the same  
104 items,—

Successes 18; Inconclusive 10; Failures 76.

The best of the chance hits were obtained with  
common names.

An extended account of the tests I received in the above-mentioned twelve sittings is given in the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* for May, 1921, where 53 out of 104 examples are fully described. I there record in detail the result of searching for each of these 53 items in *six* issues of the *Times* selected at random. Considerable latitude as regards position was allowed, yet in no instance did a chance-chosen copy of the *Times* yield as many successes as did the paper of the date for which the tests were given. Indeed, by far the greater portion of the chance hits related to common names, and especially to such tests as might be met by the presence of any one out of half a dozen names; as when searching for, 'A relative of your wife,' or, 'One in whom Alfred is interested.' These chance correspondences were frequently less apt than had been the original verifications, and about half of the successes related to one or other of such names as Mary, Emily, John, William, Thomas. It seems fairly evident that if tests are selected which exclude all reference to such names, and these tests alone are used for a comparison, the result must be a reduction of chance successes to near vanishing point.

### *Chance Coincidence Fails to Account for the Facts*

In the 53 items chosen for comparison there were 51 successes. When each item of the 53 was looked for in six other issues of the paper, the result showed a fraction under 13 as the average success attained by chance, a result in harmony with the preceding one.

### COMPARISON OF THE TWO EXPERIMENTS

My communicator gets 73 successes out of a possible 104.

Chance trial gets 18 successes out of the possible 104.

My communicator gets 51 successes out of a selected 53.

Chance trial averages 13 successes out of the same 53.

Experiments, to be conclusive, need to be based upon a considerable number of instances. Little would be proved, for example, by comparing a single test with a chance copy of the paper; for should it happen to fit, we could say that the original test was not sufficiently distinctive in character to preclude the possibility of chance parallels; yet this would be no reflection upon the accuracy of the test, neither would it disprove its spirit origin. But should experiments dealing with large numbers of instances yield chance results approximating to those of the sittings, we should then have evidence tending to throw doubt upon the super-normal

*Chance Coincidence Fails to Account for the Facts*

origin of the tests. No such instances have come under my notice, and readers have in this book sufficient material for personal experiments.

*Experimental testing for coincidences tends still further to strengthen the conviction that the originating intelligence in newspaper tests is a spirit able to use superhuman abilities.*

*The intimate personal touches constantly appearing serve similarly to deepen my conviction that the communicator is my father.*

## CHAPTER XVI

### TESTS RECEIVED FOR OTHERS AND RELATING TO FACTS UNKNOWN TO THE SITTER

THE special interest of the tests now to be recorded lies in the fact that they include information which had never been in my possession. This information was as unlooked for by me as by those for whom it was given. It still further demonstrates that the 'reading of my thoughts' is not the explanation of these newspaper tests.

The first sitting commences in the usual manner with tests for me, and then continues, as do the two following, by giving tests for other persons to whom I had to apply for the verifications, and whose permission to have them included in this book has been kindly granted.

Incidents such as these increase the difficulty of supposing that our results can be attributed to collusion or coincidence.

*March 16th, 1920, at 2.48 p.m.*

The number of tests given for verification from the first page of the morrow's *Times* was nine.

Result: Correct 7; Inconclusive 1; Failure 1.

'A little more than half-way down column one is March or Marsh, he cannot be certain as to the one letter. He knew some one of that name when on earth, and your mother



### *Tests Received for Others*

will know in a moment who he means. She would be interested not only in the man, but also in one belonging to him. The name of the latter is given a little lower. Send the paper to your mother and she will remember.'

Since this was the month of March the name appeared many times, but the interest centres in the latter statements. My parents had for many years been friendly with a Mr. and Mrs. Marsh, who were residing near them in two localities during the last few years of my father's earthly life. Three-quarters down this column, which agrees with the direction 'a little lower,' is the name of Mr. Marsh's wife. I had been unacquainted with her name, and was obliged to make inquiries before this could be verified.

'About one-third down column two, or a trifle lower, is given a date which is a very important one in your life [not in your father's nor your mother's, but in yours].<sup>1</sup> The month is given and probably the day.' [(Thinking of my birthday in three days' time, I remarked that I could guess to what he referred.) 'He is laughing and says, "Better not guess." He knows of what you are thinking, something that happened about now, a very important date for the family, but that is not what he means. The date in the paper is not the one of which you are thinking.]<sup>2</sup> Clairvoyantly he saw Cambridge close to this date.'

<sup>1</sup> The remarks within square brackets were omitted from my notes sent that evening to the Society for Psychical Research.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

*and Relating to Facts Unknown to the Sitter*

The name *Cambridge* appears exactly one-quarter down column two, while less than an inch below it is, *the 15th of March*. For some time I was at a loss to recall any event connected with this date, and therefore looked in my father's diaries. There I noticed many references to our Church Quarterly Meeting falling about this date—say between the 12th and 20th of the month. This March meeting is the most important of the year, and it is then only that candidates can offer themselves for the Wesleyan Ministry. Should they fail to pass, their further progress is barred. It had been a satisfaction to my father when I successfully passed such a meeting in March, 1889. I cannot now discover whether it was held on the 15th of the month in that year, but it must necessarily have been within a day or so of that date. My unspoken conviction that he was alluding to my birthday evidently amused my father, who pointed out that the family shared in that interest in a way that did not quite apply to the occasion he had in mind.

A verification so indefinite must be counted as 'inconclusive.'

'At the beginning of column one there is a name usually associated with a very early part of the Bible. His reason for giving it is that you have noticed that name particularly within the last few days.'

The first name in the column is *Adams*. I had certainly been thinking, during the previous day or two, of a Mrs. Adams who was an old friend of

### *Tests Received for Others*

my parents, and whom I had recently met after an interval of some years.

At this sitting I was accompanied by a clergyman who was unknown to Mrs. Leonard and whose name was not mentioned. He came with me because a few weeks earlier I had received messages of a fragmentary character purporting to come from his wife, and it seemed possible that in his presence something more might be forthcoming. The following tests were for him, and were said to be given by his wife.

‘Near the top of column two, first page of to-morrow’s *Times*, is the Christian name of the lady who comes with this gentleman.’

Four inches from the top of the column was the name *Anne Maria*. My friend told me during our return journey, while we were discussing these tests, that his wife’s name was Annie Maria. Mrs. Leonard’s control has more than once remarked upon the difficulty she experiences in distinguishing between Ann, Anne, and Annie, as they sound or seem to her so much alike. I have noticed this difficulty with other mediums also.

To resume—

‘Close to it is this gentleman’s Christian name. These are close together, possibly within half an inch.’ Here I asked my father, ‘How do *you* know these names? I do not know them myself!’ Fedra replied, ‘He did not know them, but this lady went with him

*and Relating to Facts Unknown to the Sitter*

to look them out. If correct she will go again and look out others. It makes a still better test when you do not know the names.'

Immediately following the above two names came *The Rev Frederick*. My friend's name is Frederic (without the 'k'). These names appeared upon adjoining lines within half an inch as stated.

'About one-third down column two is the name of a place at which this lady lived and which she liked.'

Wishing to be in a position to examine these tests next day, I asked during our return journey what towns would fulfil this assertion. The Rev. Frederic named two which would meet the test. One was the home of her childhood and the other Cambridge. He included the latter because, although his wife had not actually resided there, she had frequently stayed on long visits to her uncle, a University Professor, and was greatly attached to the place. One-quarter down this column appears *Cambridge*.

These three tests, so confirmed, were accepted by my friend as indications that his wife was in touch with us. She had given her name and his in an unmistakable way, and named the place which he knew to be associated in her mind with most pleasant recollections. Many other evidences of her identity were given, both then and at a later interview with Mrs. Leonard. They are certainly difficult to explain on any supposition other than

### *Tests Received for Others*

that of communication from the spirit side of life.

The suggestion that these names had been discovered by exploring my mind is out of the question ; nor can it be argued that they were obtained from my friend's mind, seeing that the tests were given only a few minutes after he entered a house where he was unknown. They must necessarily have been looked out before Mrs. Leonard saw him.

Would it not be entirely natural that his wife, perceiving his intention to be present, should avail herself of assistance in providing evidential matter of this character as supplementary proof of her identity ?

The explanation of the alleged communicators is consistent and covers all the facts. Could any alternative supposition sustain this claim on its behalf ?

*April 23rd, 1920, at 3 p.m.*

The number of tests given for verification from the first page of the morrow's *Times* was nine.

Result: Correct 7; Inconclusive 1; Failure 1.

I now proceed to an incident which still further rules out the hypothesis of telepathy from minds on earth. During a sitting on March 26th, 1920, I explained that, owing to absence from home, it would be impossible to keep my appointment for that day fortnight, and that I would send a friend. I gave not the slightest clue as to who it would be, but had arranged to let a medical man have the



*and Relating to Facts Unknown to the Sitter*

interview, hoping that he might get into communication with his brother. I was not a little surprised, therefore, when my father replied that he would be present and bring my friend's friend, with whom he had already attended one sitting. I understood the reference; fifteen months previously I had accompanied this doctor to a clairvoyante, and although nothing of interest transpired there, my father had alluded to the occasion when next I spoke to him at Mrs. Leonard's, saying that he had been present and noticed my friend's friend trying unsuccessfully to impress the clairvoyante with his thoughts. It would therefore seem that my purpose to send this doctor was already known to the communicator. By no normal means could Mrs. Leonard have been aware of it, and the telepathy theory can scarcely be invoked to explain what follows.

*April 23rd, 1920, at 3 p.m.*

The first set of tests given me on this date proved to be for my medical friend from his brother, who had successfully communicated with him through Mrs. Leonard since my previous visit.

‘The first set of tests are for your friend from his spirit communicator whose name is about half-way down the first column of the first page of the *Times* for to-morrow.’

Exactly half-way down that column appears the name *Dyson*, which is correct.

### *Tests Received for Others*

‘Very close to it is your friend’s name or one almost similar.’

Two and a half inches below *Dyson* is the name *St Andrew’s*. Until receiving his comments upon these tests I had been unaware that his second name was Andrews. ‘Almost similar,’ the apostrophe makes the difference.

‘A little below, say three-quarters down, is the name of a place which they have visited together and much enjoyed.’

Dr. Dyson on inspecting the paper found in this spot a mention of *Filey*, a place where he and his brother had frequently spent holidays together.

‘A little above is the name of a mutual friend of theirs.’

He writes that almost immediately above the previous names appear *Jones* and *Davies*, and that either of these might be the mutual friend.

‘Near the top of column one is the name of a great friend who has passed on and is with the spirit young man’ (*i.e.* with the doctor’s brother).

His letter continues: ‘The first notice at the top of column one contains the name *Jack*. This must be Jack Nancarrow; he is absolutely the only great friend now passed over that I have. Moreover, in all the first half of column one, there is

*and Relating to Facts Unknown to the Sitter*

no other name or surname whatever of any friend of mine.'

Of all the above information I knew nothing, save the friendship with Nancarrow and the name Dyson. Clearly, therefore, there had been no reading of my mind. Nor is it easy to see how, even had these facts been known to me, mind-reading could account for such piecing together and accurate selection from the *Times* as forms the peculiar feature of these tests. The information given for my two friends, the clergyman and the doctor, was as surprising to them as it was unexpected by me.

*May 21st, 1920, at 3 p.m.*

The number of tests given for verification from the front page of the morrow's *Times* was six.

Result: Correct 3; Inconclusive 1; Failures 2.

At this sitting I was again accompanied by the clergyman to whom reference has been made in connection with the tests of March 16th, 1920. As on the former occasion, the communicator was his wife, and the first test referred to his daughter Margaret, who sat with us, and of whose name I was, of course, aware.

'In column one, and a third down, is her daughter's name.'

The name *Margaret* is within two inches of one-third down column one.

'In column two, near the top, is named the

### *Tests Received for Others*

locality where her husband was born. There may be some reason for saying "locality," so it had better be written down so.'

Close to the top of this column appears *Plymouth*. The place of his birth, as I afterwards learnt from my friend, was a town within twelve miles of Plymouth.

'Half-way down column two is a sentence, not a name, which this lady would like applied by her husband and daughter to herself. It would be very appropriate; but she would like one word of it changed, and they will recognise at once which word she means.'

Nearly half-way down column two was the following:—

'At the going down of the sun,  
And in the morning,  
We will remember them,—Mother.'

Evidently the word to be changed is 'them,' and in its place is required the word 'her.'

## CHAPTER XVII

### TESTS GIVEN BEFORE THE TYPE IS IN POSITION

IN considering the significance of these newspaper tests, it is above all important to realise the hour at which they were given. The sitting of February 13th, 1920, at which were given the tests discussed in Chapter XIV., ended at 5.15 p.m., and a copy for these tests was posted in London at about six o'clock that evening.

In order to weigh the relevancy of this fact, taken in conjunction with the general accuracy of the verifications on the day following, it will be necessary to know the method and time of printing, and particularly the hour at which type for the front page is produced and placed in order.

The following is an account of a visit of inquiry to the printing office of the *Times*.

### INQUIRIES AS TO THE TIME WHEN TEST-NOTICES ARE IN TYPE

On Wednesday, February 2nd, 1921, I visited the printing works of the *Times*, accompanied by a friend who had obtained the necessary permits. In response to my request for information about preparations for the front page of the following



### *Tests Given before the Type is in Position*

day's *Times*, we were conducted to a room in which we saw column-long trays. Three of these trays were pointed out as being the receptacles in which would be arranged all material for the first three columns of the morrow's paper.

At that time, 4.30 p.m., these trays held but little type, barely sufficient to print one-quarter of a column. We inquired where at that moment were the advertisements which these trays would presently contain? For answer the guide conducted us to a room in which numbers of linotype machines were being worked, and explained that all advertisements of 'Births, Marriages, Deaths, In Memoriam' were divided among the operators of these machines, who were reproducing them in the form of type bars (the technical name of which I forget), and that these bars of type would be placed in the trays we had first seen. It thus appears that after notices arrive on the premises (and are presumably listed by clerks), they are dispersed among many operators, and not again collected into one place until reappearing as type in the trays above mentioned. It seemed important to learn at what time these trays would contain their full complement of type, and we were assured that this would not be until a late hour in the evening. After a tour of the works we repassed the trays at 5 p.m., and found the day-attendant about to leave work. He said he would be unable to state with any degree of certainty the final position of any particular notice, and that the night worker, then about to take his place, could not

### *Tests Given before the Type is in Position*

know until late in the evening, when the chief part of the type should have arrived and been arranged.

Giving a last look before leaving, we saw the several classes of notices lying all together in that portion of the tray which corresponds with the upper half of the first column of the paper. Looking carefully at one particular advertisement, I noted that its position was then four inches from the top, but next morning in the paper it was found close to the bottom of the column.

Thus it seems clear that even unimpeded access to the works at 5 p.m. would not enable an inquirer to learn the ultimate position of any one name, nor even the contents of the majority of the advertisements; for many of these would not yet be in type, existing only on separate papers in the office or the linotype department. A scrutiny of the type-trays later in the evening would make possible a more or less accurate idea of the position which names might ultimately take. But at that time my sitting is ended, and the notes have already been posted to the Society for Psychical Research.

Any person permitted to collect tests from the material at the printing works, previous to the hour of my sittings, would have two alternatives. He might scrutinise letters as they arrive, noting the alphabetical order and total number of notices destined for these first three columns, or, he might later inspect the linotype machines and see what was being typed by them. He might in either case succeed in observing the total next day's contents of the columns in question, but would

### *Tests Given before the Type is in Position*

have to rely upon calculation for any estimate of the probable position which particular names might take in the morrow's paper.

It becomes evident that even were one in telephonic connection with the *Times* office at the hour of my sittings he would not be able to receive information relevant to these tests, unless it related to items for the 'Births Column' having initial letters early in the alphabet. For example, should any one know that Adams or Brown was sending in a birth notice, he might with some confidence assume that this would appear close to the top of column one. But inspection of tests received shows how few instances of this kind appear; indeed it looks as if my communicator designedly avoided, as a general rule, the upper part of the first column. There has been an evident preference for tests lying in the upper-third section of column two.

Mrs. Leonard has no telephone, nor has any telegram been brought in after my arrival.

The following Editorial Note appears at the close of my article upon Newspaper Tests in the *Journal of the Society for Psychological Research* for May, 1921.

"Readers of Mr. Drayton Thomas's paper may ask what procedure is followed in regard to setting up in type such advertisements in the *Times* as are referred to in the 'tests.' Sir William Barrett, F.R.S., has kindly forwarded to us two letters he received from the manager of the *Times* which

*Tests Given before the Type is in Position*

throw light upon this question. The first letter is as follows:—

‘PRINTING HOUSE SQUARE, E.C.4,

‘October 19th, 1920.

‘The small advertisements in the *Times* (which include Births, Deaths, and Marriages) arrive at all hours of the day, and we commence setting them at 5 p.m. I should think that often quite half of them are set before 8 p.m., and sometimes even a larger proportion than this. Beyond this, you may notice that many announcements are ordered to appear for two or three insertions. Consequently, some of them are in type for two days.

‘If you care to give me any particular instances, I will gladly make an inquiry.’

“In reply to the invitation contained in the last sentence of the above letter, Sir William Barrett wrote asking for particulars concerning the particular notice referred to above and given at a sitting when Mr. Drayton Thomas was accompanied by a friend, the Rev. Frederic ———.

“The reply from the manager of the *Times* ran thus:—

‘October 25th, 1920.

‘In reply to your letter of even date, I had the original copy of the announcement referred to by the Rev. F. ——— brought up to me, and find that this was in the office by 9.27 a.m. of the morning of the 16th March, and was inserted the following day. By the time referred to—4 or 5 o’clock of

### *Tests Given before the Type is in Position*

the 16th March—the copy had been set up for some considerable time, and of course had been seen by several members of our staff.’<sup>1</sup>

“Mr. Drayton Thomas’s sittings were held at various times between about 11.45 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. So that it would appear from the statement made in the first letter from the manager of the *Times* that at the time of the sitting the particular notices referred to in the tests might in some cases be already set up in type; in other cases they were probably not yet set up; in any case their ultimate position on the page could not be normally known until late in the afternoon. We may therefore conclude that, quite apart from other evidence we have of Mrs. Leonard’s honesty, the possibility of collusion or fraud may be dismissed as inadequate to explain the facts. As to what methods Mr. Drayton Thomas’s ‘communicators’ may have adopted to acquire the knowledge necessary for their purpose, we are unfortunately quite in the dark. These newspaper tests differ from book tests in this respect, that for some days at least before a book test was given, the books were all standing ready in their shelves, and, assuming clairvoyance, might at any moment be clairvoyantly perceived.”

<sup>1</sup> For description of this test, see pages 158–9.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### EXAMPLES OF NEWSPAPER TESTS, INCLUDING SOME OF THE EARLIEST RECEIVED

IN this selection of tests a few of minor character have been included on account of their being in some way linked with their more interesting neighbours.

*October 10th, 1919, at 3 p.m.*

On this date I received my first tests from the Public Press. The majority were correctly verified next morning, among them being the following:—

‘Look in the *Times* newspaper to-morrow, and in the second column of the front page, half-way down or nearly so, will be your name and your father’s, your own coming first.’

On looking at the *Times* of next day, viz., October 11th, I found that exactly one-quarter down the second column of the first page was a marriage announcement containing the name *Charles John Workman*. This met the test, my name being Charles and my father’s John. I then looked at the corresponding column of the paper for several earlier days of that week, but these showed no other such conjunction of our names.

### *Examples of Newspaper Tests*

‘In the first column, and much in line with the above, there is an address mentioned which your father knows well; he knows the town and locality.’

I found in column one, exactly on a level with our names appearing in column two, the address *Ventnor, I.W.* This was the only address meeting the description, and it answered the test to perfection; for my father had worked in the island, and frequently visited Ventnor on professional duty.

‘Now for an attempt at clairvoyance on the physical plane. He thinks that close by there is a word looking like Loo or Loos.’ (Thinking this too vague, I asked if the verb ‘to lose,’ or the adjective ‘loose,’ was meant?) ‘It is more like the name of a town or even of a person.’

I mentally concluded that if this word were there it would prove to be the French Loos, of which one had heard during the war. While discussing the probability of this with a friend that evening we concluded that, if such a name appeared in that part of the paper next morning, it would be a remarkably good item of evidence for super-normal intelligence. To my considerable surprise, I discovered, in a ‘Golden Wedding’ notice following next upon our names ‘Charles John’ in column two, that some one living at *Loose Court* had been married at the Church of *All Saints, Loose*. This was my first acquaintance with the

*Including Some of the Earliest Received*

fact that a Kentish village bears this name. One can scarcely suppose that the appearance of such an unusual name in an exact position described on the previous day can be attributed to chance.

*October 24th, 1919, at 3 p.m.*

At this sitting I received eight tests for verification from the morrow's *Times*. Of these there were five found to be correct, while two were inconclusive, and one failed.

‘In the *Times* for to-morrow, the first page, column two, and nearer the top than one-quarter down, is your Uncle Alfred's name.’

I asked if his three names would be there, and was told to look for two of them. When inspecting the *Times* next morning, I found that the name *Alfred* was three inches from the top of column two, and that the name *William* stood immediately beneath it. Although I knew that Alfred's second name commenced with ‘W,’ I do not think I ever knew what it stood for, and had to refer to family records before discovering that his full name was Alfred William Thomas. It became evident that my communicator knew more about Alfred than I did, and it was equally clear that he had superior knowledge about the contents of the next day's paper. Replying to my question as to the source of his knowledge, he replied that he went to the newspaper office and selected tests as best he could from the incomplete preparations for the paper, and

### *Examples of Newspaper Tests*

'had just come from there now.' The fact that he claims to be Alfred's brother has an interesting bearing upon his knowledge of our family names.

'Almost as if in conjunction with the foregoing is the name of a connection of ours by marriage.'

At first sight this seemed to offer a somewhat wide range of choice, but search down the column revealed only one name meeting the requirement of the test, and this was but two inches from 'Alfred.' In none of the columns could another be found; there was but one, and that one close to 'Alfred,' *the name of a family with whom we are connected through Alfred's wife.*

'As he looked there he saw one announcement three or more times longer than the average.'

The average length of these announcements was four or five lines, and it was true that within four inches from 'Alfred,' and only two inches from the name of our family connection, was the longest of all, no less than fifteen lines.

The above three tests lay close together, as though a small portion of the paper had been taken and search made for suitable tests within its narrow limits. Prolonged experience of these tests shows that this is frequently the case; sometimes the tests are scattered, but usually there is a clump in one spot.

*Including Some of the Earliest Received*

I took the precaution of searching the *Times* for the day before, but found that not a single reference would then have been correct; they were only right for the day stated.

The following test was given on the same occasion, and is interesting for its sequel at a subsequent sitting.

‘Turn over two pages and look at the top of the fifth, somewhere about the middle or say between the third column and half-way across. There at the top is mentioned something he would very much like to give you, and you would find it acceptable.’ Here Feda seemed to be confused about the word ‘article.’ She mentioned it inquiringly, then hesitated and said that he meant either a newspaper article, or ‘a thing,’ but she was not sure which. Finally giving it up, she ejaculated the word ‘financial,’ and concluded her effort by the words, ‘Financial, a sum of money.’

This left me in the dark as to what was intended, until, on inspecting page five next morning, at the top of the fourth column I saw a heading in bold type which included the words, ‘Investment Buying.’ Having had a considerable sum of money in the bank, waiting to be invested for a trust estate, my mind had been much occupied about investments. I had visited my stockbroker but three hours previously, while passing through London on my way to Datchet, where this sitting took place. One wonders whether Feda’s confusion over the



### *Examples of Newspaper Tests*

word 'article' arose from her imagining that it was something suitable for a gift, while my father was trying to inform her that he was thinking of *an article on finance*?

### THE SEQUEL TO THE ABOVE

At the next sitting Fedra reintroduced the subject saying, 'He wishes to know about the tests of last time. Did you find out about the present he would like to have given you?' To this I replied, 'Yes, it was something particularly appropriate just then.' Fedra continued, 'What does he mean by saying, "Calling for something"? It does not relate to himself, it is not the test, but something happened just then making a curious link. He says it was most appropriate to that call on the way.' The last remark was significant; for I had given no information on the subject, my only observation having been the reply above recorded. I concluded that, while my father and I understood the allusion, Fedra remained unaware of its meaning. That I should have called on my stockbroker and made an investment about noon, and then proceeded to Datchet to be told, by means of this reference to the morrow's *Times*, that my father would have liked to give me an investment, was rather too remarkable for a coincidence. It may be worth adding that, at the conclusion of business, I had spoken with the stockbroker about his son, who had been killed in the war, and made some reference to the possibility of communication. Is it not possible that

*Including Some of the Earliest Received*

my strong current of thought, then turned for a few minutes to experiences of communication with my father, may have attracted his attention and brought to him some knowledge of my whereabouts and the business which took me to that office? It would have left him some three hours in which to search for an appropriate reference among the preparations for the next day's paper. That there could have been collusion between the stockbroker and the medium is scarcely possible; the former was emphatic in expressing his disbelief in the possibility of communication.

NOTE ON NEWSPAPER TESTS  
OF OCTOBER 10TH AND 24TH, 1919

I had taken the precaution of calling upon a sceptical friend, and giving him a copy of the tests on my way home from these sittings, thus securing evidence in case my accuracy as to dates and hours was challenged. Realising by this time that these tests were likely to be continued, I commenced, as previously stated, to make duplicate copies, sending the second by post the same evening to the secretary of the Society for Psychical Research. Thus two persons have copies of these tests before the next morning's papers are issued, and this protects me against slips of memory or charges of inaccuracy.

The notes sent to the Society for Psychical Research, 20 Hanover Square, London, W.1., have

### *Examples of Newspaper Tests*

been preserved, and by courtesy of the secretary may be inspected.

*December 4th, 1919, at 12 noon*

The number of tests given for verification from the front page of the morrow's *Times* was five.

Result: Correct 3; Inconclusive 2.

This sitting was earlier than most, and one of the first remarks made respecting the tests was that they had been selected when preparations for the next day's issue at the *Times* office had not progressed so far as usual. Recollecting this, the difference in stated position of the following test-name is specially interesting.

'On page one and column one, about two inches from the bottom, he thought he saw clairvoyantly the name Hutchinson.'

At first I had written this as Hutchison, but on spelling it aloud was told to insert an 'n' after 'i,' making it Hutchinson. Searching next morning in the spot named, I failed to find it, but turning from the bottom of the first to the top of the second column, discovered it there in the corrected form, *Hutchinson*. The arrival of a few more birth and marriage announcements would have been sufficient to account for the changed position of this notice.

*Including Some of the Earliest Received*

*September 3rd, 1920, at 3.45 p.m.*

The number of tests given for verification from the first page of the morrow's *Times* was six.

Result: Correct 4; Inconclusive 2.

‘Nearly half-way up column one of the first page there is a name—put it in another way—he is strongly reminded of American conditions. There are two words on different lines reminding him of America.’

Within an inch of the top of the lower half of column one there appears the name *Hudson*, and it is repeated in the line following. Feda unquestionably used the words ‘on different lines,’ but in my copy of the notes sent that evening to the Society for Psychical Research, I paraphrased it into ‘in different ways,’ because this was what I supposed was meant by ‘different lines.’ It was a surprise next morning to discover that the ‘different lines’ were lines of print. This is one of many incidents showing how entirely independent of the sitter’s mind is the devising of these tests.

The following was from my sister, who, having joined my father some months previously, had already commenced attending these sittings with him, and was taking an increasing part in the experiments.

‘Your sister says that she thought she could clairvoyantly see, some way down column two, an address in Italy. She wishes to try if she is really clairvoyant yet.’

### *Examples of Newspaper Tests*

In the lower portion of the top half of column two appears, *La Mortola, Ventimiglia, Italy.*

*December 10th, 1920, at 5.57 p.m.*

The number of tests given for verification from the first page of the morrow's *Times* was ten.

Result: Correct 6; Inconclusive 2; Failures 2.

‘In the *Times* for to-morrow, column two of front page and close to the top, he thinks within an inch, is the name of a friend, a man, whom you were helping lately.’

There exactly was *Leslie*. I had recently been discussing books and other matters with Mr. Leslie Curnow, and, only a week before, had spent an evening at his rooms in order to study some psychic problems about which he was good enough to desire my opinion.

‘Very close, almost in conjunction with it, is another name which will be an additional clue to him.’

Perpendicularly above the name *Leslie*, and separated only by a single line, was *Queen Square*. As Mr. Curnow is on the staff of *Light*, the offices of which are in *Queen Square*, this is conclusive; especially as I have rarely met him anywhere else than at this address. But since both the above names were embodied in the section headed, ‘In Memoriam,’ it seemed necessary to discover whether they had appeared there on the same date in the



*Including Some of the Earliest Received*

previous year. I found that while *Leslie* had been there twelve months before, *Queen Square* had not.

‘About three-quarters down column one are the names of two relations of your wife, whom he often sees on the other side.’

Just above three-quarters down this column appear together the names *Emilie Mary*. My wife’s sister was named Emily, and her mother Mary. Both have frequently sent messages to her at these sittings.

*February 4th, 1921, at 6.20 p.m.*

The number of tests given for verification from the first page of the morrow’s *Times* was ten.

Result: Correct 5; Inconclusive 4; Failure 1.

‘In the *Times* for to-morrow, column two, page 1, and one-quarter down, there is a saint’s name which belongs to a member of my family, not John. Its owner is with me, and I often see him.’

One-quarter down is *James*, the name of my father’s uncle, who died in 1879. I include this little test because it served as landmark to the next.

‘Very close are two names strongly suggesting Roman Catholicism.’

Less than two inches above *James* appear the

### *Examples of Newspaper Tests*

names, *Costa Ricci*, and immediately over the *Ricci* are the letters R.I.P. The name Ricci is closely connected with the Jesuits, Lorenzo Ricci having been General of the Society in 1759 and prominent in activities which culminated in its expulsion from France. Matteo Ricci, 1552-1610, was a prominent Jesuit missionary to China, and there were others. Costa was the celebrated Italian painter whose picture of 'The Madonna and Child Enthroned' is in the National Gallery. The letters R.I.P. next these two names complete the suggestiveness; probably no one conversant with the history of the Roman Church would fail to be reminded of it by such a conjunction. My father had made a careful study of the history of the Jesuits.

'In column one, and just above half-way down is the name of one who wrote you lately; he is not a relation, and your father did not know him when on earth. He is interested in psychic subjects. Your father feels that this gentleman is going to write again very shortly.'

Just two inches short of half-way down column one is the name *Manta*. It will be objected that Manta is not Mann. I have, however, included this test for its suggestiveness; because I have a friend named Mann, whom the description accurately fits. He had written several times previously about psychic questions, and *only four days after this sitting I received another letter from him.*

On several occasions when the required word

*Including Some of the Earliest Received*

was not present on the page, my communicator has selected, as in the preceding instance, another which approaches in sound or in spelling the one he needs.

‘ At the bottom of column one is your Uncle Alfred’s name, and close by are certain words which would refer to his niece “ E,” not a name, but words.’

Four and a half inches from the bottom of this column appear the names *William Thomas*, my uncle’s full name being Alfred William Thomas. One inch below this is notice of a death ‘ *of heart failure,*’ which connects with the recent death of his niece ‘ E ’ by heart failure after an operation.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SUCCESSFUL TESTS AND NOTE UPON PSYCHOMETRY

#### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SUCCESSFUL TESTS

ON a review of the test-messages presented for consideration in the foregoing pages, it will probably be agreed that no theories of collusion, nor of coincidence, can suffice to explain the manner in which they were verified by the *Times*. The relevancy of the names found in the indicated portion of that paper for the following day being clear and precise for the more part, and requiring no ingenious reading in of meanings which did not lie on the surface.

The examples given are but a small fraction of the number received during the last two years, some of which have been taken from other papers besides the *Times*, and some also from magazines previous to the date of their publication.

This type of evidence is new, and represents a desire on the part of its originators to produce results even more arresting and conclusive than the cross-correspondences and book tests which for some years preceded it, results which cannot

### *Note upon Psychometry*

be attributed to the exercise of any known powers of the human mind, whether subliminal or otherwise.

Let us suppose that the medium has such development of clairvoyant ability as would enable her to wander at will, and in full consciousness, around the offices and printing department of the *Times*. In this way she might ascertain that certain names were to appear in the morrow's paper, but how would this assist her in estimating the probable position in which these names would appear? True, if there were birth-notices from families whose initial letters were A, B, or C, it would be safe to surmise that these notices would be in the top part of column one, where such are invariably placed. But this supposition does not greatly assist us, since my communicator has shown a preference for the second column, and has given comparatively few from the upper portion of the first.

Continuing our supposition, and assuming that the medium observes that a certain advertisement is already arranged for some definite position, how are we to picture the process by which she discovers that a name in this paragraph can be linked up with an event in my father's life?

Having found out that the name Leek (see page 146) would appear in column two, by what method are we to suppose the medium learnt that the name Goodwin would be placed near it, although in the first column? And, further, how did she know that this name might be used to indicate one whom my sister and I used to know more than forty years ago?



### *The Significance of Successful Tests and*

If it be suggested that the relevancy of Leek and Goodwin was to be extracted from my own mind, it may be inquired in reply, 'Whose intelligence was it that accomplished the feat?' Nor would this suggestion of the exploration of the sitter's memories account for occasions when the name in the morrow's paper has been linked with facts unknown to the sitter, and only discovered by him when making subsequent inquiries.

The outstanding fact is that names which are being arranged for a place in the morrow's Press have been correctly indicated as to position, and then linked with incidents which were sometimes known, and sometimes unknown, to the sitter. It was very intelligently done. *Whose intelligence accomplished the feat?* If selected from my own mind—Who was it made the very judicious selection? If we say that it was done by the medium, we have to assume abilities for which we have no evidence, and pass into the region of pure guesswork. Conscious fraud is out of the question in these instances, and of a sufficient subconscious intelligence we have no evidence whatever.

#### A CONSIDERATION OF THE POWERS NECESSARY FOR THE COMPOSITION OF SUCCESSFUL NEWSPAPER TESTS

Difficult as it proved to imagine any extension of known human faculties by which the medium might herself have produced the book tests, it becomes even more so when we try to suppose her

### *Note upon Psychometry*

the author of newspaper tests and, more especially, of those containing internal evidence of my father's identity.

It will be recalled (see Chapter IX) that we found the following abilities requisite to the production of the book tests:—

1. Such degree of clairvoyance as would permit the making of minute observations in distant places and retaining memory of things there seen.
2. Ability to extract the general meaning from printed pages in distant houses.
3. And to do this despite the fact that the books concerned are not open at the time.

To which, for production of private and personal book messages, it was necessary to add:—

4. Ability to obtain knowledge of happenings in the sitter's home and private life relating both to the present and to the distant past.
5. An intelligence which knows how to select from among our hosts of memories the suitable items for association with the book-passage, or conversely, of finding a suitable passage for the particular memory fished from the deeps of our mind.

This is a formidable list of requirements, and would appear ludicrous were it not compiled in an attempt to explore the possibilities of an alternative explanation. The facts face us. They have to be accounted for. They have been repeatedly produced. By whom? Only by those possessing and exercising the abilities listed above. The

### *The Significance of Successful Tests and*

suggestion of trickery or collusion has been dismissed from court; it is impossible. Did Mrs. Leonard possess the requisite faculties? He would be an imaginative and credulous person who dare assert it; no physical or mental powers known to science could accomplish what has been repeatedly done. The messages themselves often assert, and invariably assume, that their author is in spirit-life.

#### THE AUTHORSHIP OF NEWSPAPER TESTS

Let us now venture upon an examination of the supposition that newspaper tests are produced by some elusive fragment of Mrs. Leonard's personality.

Fraud and collusion are here even more absolutely ruled out than before. If a spirit is not the author, then Mrs. Leonard must be. In that case we must further add to the hypothetical list of her abilities:—

6. Power to obtain information as to names which are to appear in the morrow's Press.
7. And a knowledge of their approximate positions on the page.
8. Power to ascertain many details of my father's earth life, including some which were unknown to me and only verifiable by inspecting his diaries, or by questioning relations.

We must recollect that the newspaper is not in type at the hour when these tests are given, and that the names concerned are only to be seen upon various slips of paper apportioned among operators

### *Note upon Psychometry*

in the printing rooms. How are these names scrutinised, and how are their destined positions estimated, positions which they will not assume for some hours after the sitting ends? We are entirely unaware of any human power, whether of normal or hypnotised persons, by which this might be accomplished.

But the climax of achievement relates to those tests in which old memories relating to my father are incorporated. Can we imagine any ability by which Mrs. Leonard could effectively probe the memories of my relations—several of whom are persons she has never seen—and select appropriate incidents therefrom? My father's diaries, which have always been securely under lock and key, afford a few hints which have helped me to verify tests; can we suppose that some fragment of Mrs. Leonard's personality has discovered their location, and so read them as to realise the relevancy of their allusions to matter which was subsequently connected by intelligent and verifiable association with names of persons and places appearing in the *Times* and the *Telegraph* on the day following the sittings?

Such attempts take us into realms of imagination, where we leave far behind us all proved facts and experiences relating to human powers, whether physical or mental.

The explanation given by my communicator is simple and in agreement with all that has been discovered as to the possible interaction of spirit intelligence with mundane life,

### *The Significance of Successful Tests and*

Nor are book and newspaper tests the only proof given. All my sittings abound in references to such of my doings and surroundings as would be unknowable to Mrs. Leonard normally, also with references to my father's earth life; besides which, *they include a wide range of elusive touches which are unproducible in cold print, but in which I see my father's personality ringing true to that which I knew so well during his life on earth.*

Our search for alternative explanation fails, that of spirit action remains alone upon the field.

Let us then pass to another phase of the inquiry, and ask whether Feda, Mrs. Leonard's control, represents the intelligence by which these test-messages are devised? We have previously assumed, for the sake of argument, that Mrs. Leonard's clairvoyant ability enables her to roam at will where the preparations for the *Times* of the morrow are in progress; but let us now suppose that Feda can do this, and that she ascertains the probable position of numerous names. This would account for such a message as the appearance of the name 'Loose' in the designated column, although, upon our supposition, one would expect Feda to do more accurate work in the transmission of names than she has usually accomplished; for, in this case, there would not be that liability to error in the transmitting of a name between the communicator and Feda of which there is constant evidence. Let us say that Feda sees the name, and resolves to astonish the sitter by linking it with his own reminiscences; her next task would be to explore



### *Note upon Psychometry*

his memory for suitable material. Can a control do this ?

An imperfect acquaintance with the power of psychometry<sup>1</sup> is apt to bewilder the inexperienced investigator. He finds that a psychometrist, by holding in the hand some object from his wardrobe, can tell him various matters relating to his past doings. He has no means of perceiving the point at which the psychometrising passes into the reception of information from higher intelligences, and he may easily fall into the error of assuming that a good sensitive can, by contact with his property or his person, as when holding his hand, 'tell him all things that ever he did.' It is not so, and the intelligent sensitive would be the first to admit it. Certain fleeting impressions, many of them curiously accurate, can be gained by psychometric faculty; but this is not to be confused with any such power as the exploring at will of the sitter's mind and memory. The psychometrist takes what comes and is limited in his choice; whether he could hold my hand and say to himself, 'I desire to know what connection this person may have had with Leek,' and then receive from my memory the names of my old friends there, is a question to which only prolonged experiment can provide answer. I am unacquainted with any such results.

But if a medium *could* do this we would readily assume that Feda might do it even more easily. Up to the present all my experiments with Feda

<sup>1</sup> See note on Psychometry at end of chapter.

### *The Significance of Successful Tests and*

have failed to find in her any trace of ability to explore my thoughts or reproduce my memories; the evidence all points the other way. I will restrict myself to one illustrative incident. My friend, Mr. G. F. Bird, knew my father intimately, and on learning that I believed myself to be in communication with him through Mrs. Leonard, asked me to try the following test. 'I remember,' said he, 'that Mr. Thomas once met a visitor at our house. Years afterwards when we removed to London your father came to see us, and looking through our album came upon the photograph of the visitor of whom I am thinking. He made a curious remark, and it is possible that he would, if you asked him, be able to recall something that was unusual in this connection.' I promised to repeat this to my communicator and ask him what he could recollect of the circumstance.

Now the whole point of this incident lies in the following fact, about which I said nothing to Mr. Bird until the experiment was completed. I clearly remembered that, about the time first alluded to, there was a coloured lady visiting Mr. and Mrs. Bird, and as she was a friend of theirs it seemed more than likely that in their album would be her photograph. I fully expected that the remark which it was expected my father might remember would prove to relate to the lady's colour, and when, through Feda, I asked if he could revive this memory of the album I fully expected to get the answer, 'She was black.' Nothing of the sort happened; the communicator knew many things

### *Note upon Psychometry*

about Mr. Bird and his old home, but failed to recollect the trivial remark about the photograph or even to distinguish the particular visitor inquired about. Had Feda been 'reading my mind,' she might have brought off a striking result, which, however misleading to me as regards my father's presence and memory, would have shown ability to seize the prominent thought in the sitter's mind at the moment, a thought which had also been strongly with me for several preceding days. So expectant was I that this experiment would yield the word 'black,' that I wrote out my anticipation and the reason for it, and handed this in a sealed envelope to Mr. Bird before going to the medium.

Feda has always similarly failed when trying to get at my thought. In conversations with her upon this point I gathered that, when first commencing her work as control with Mrs. Leonard, she would get some impressions from the sitter in addition to messages from spirit communicators. She was, however, soon instructed that it was the duty of a good control to discriminate, and to refuse steadily all impressions emanating from the sitter. Thus one suspects that with an inferior quality of mediumship, or when a control is not experienced and careful, sitters may occasionally receive a certain amount of supposed 'evidential matter' which has its origin in themselves and not in the mind of spirit friends. It is one of the complications of our subject, and worthy of careful investigation. I do not think it results in anything worse than a partial misunderstanding on the part of inexperienced

## *The Significance of Successful Tests and*

sitters who, perhaps too easily, assume that all 'evidence' is equally valuable, provided it can be proved that the information received could not have come normally before the notice of the sensitive. For it would indeed be a poor sitting in which such psychometrising, whether done by the sensitive or the control, was not mingled with messages emanating from higher sources. The disentangling of the two streams of knowledge provides wholesome work for that sane and balanced judgment which should protect the inquirer on the mental side, even as a pure heart and prayerful aspiration protect him on the spiritual.

From the above digression we return to the question of the origin of our *Times* messages. I am satisfied that fraud, whether conscious or unconscious, on the part of medium or control, could not account for the facts; and that no assumed extension of clairvoyance or other faculties in the medium, nor of 'fishing' by the control in the sitter's mind, can assist us in solving the problem. I have compared all suggested explanations, so far as known to me, with my experience of newspaper messages, extending over a period of two years, and I know of none, save one, which covers more than the outer fringe of the evidence. *That my father links his former memories with matter discovered in preparation for the morrow's Press is the only explanation logically fitting with the facts.*

That cautious criticism should endeavour to exhaust all possible avenues of explanation before accepting this belief is no cause for complaint.



### *Note upon Psychometry*

It is right and wise, and one would wish to have it so. But the evidence requires to be considered *in its entirety*: so-called explanations which take no account of the more difficult facts, or theories depending for their cogency upon assumptions of subconscious abilities for which we have no proof, are only obstacles placed in the pathway of advancing knowledge. When true inferences have been drawn from facts, one is free to proceed, making use of the knowledge won for solving further problems, and thereby gaining yet clearer light upon life's meaning and the interaction of the spirit realms and earth.

Those whose minds are, by constitution or training, logical and cautious would, I am aware, find it easier to share my conviction if they could conceive the methods by which these newspaper tests are accomplished. I am frequently asked if the communicator does not explain how the thing is done? My own curiosity suggested many questions, and my father has never wearied in his endeavours to elucidate, to the limited extent it may be possible, his methods in obtaining the tests. Fragments of these conversations are recorded in the next chapter. He represents himself as an experimenter, learning by experience how to carry out successfully a scheme devised by a group of older and more advanced minds for the benefit of those on earth who are seriously striving to understand. This group, realising how baffling to us is our uncertainty as to the possible extension of telepathic ability and the degree in which this



## *The Significance of Successful Tests and*

human power may be supposed to account for many of the phenomena of mediumship, has devised sundry methods of helping us by the elimination of this element. Book tests were much more difficult to explain by any imaginable extension of telepathy than had been some of the phenomena preceding them; and now newspaper messages have been devised to carry this process of elimination a step further.

### NOTE UPON PSYCHOMETRY

Psychometry is described by Mr. J. Arthur Hill as 'The gathering of information about the history of an object or its owner, by handling it.' He adds, 'The thing is a fact, but how it comes about is unknown, even to the psychometrist.'

In Spence's *Encyclopædia of Occultism* it is defined as follows: 'The faculty of reading the characters, surroundings, etc., of persons by holding in the hand small objects which they have had in their possession.'

A brief description of my first experience of this power may illuminate the theme. Having been introduced to a lady who was said to give information about people by handling their letters, I asked permission to put this to the test. The lady, who is the wife of the mayor of an important provincial town, readily consented, and I handed her a letter received some years previously from a friend who had since died. The letter which, I need scarcely add, she did not attempt to read,

### *Note upon Psychometry*

made no reference to his health. I was given first some apposite description of his personal character, and then followed this sentence: 'The writer has a strong spirit in a frail body; indeed his hold upon physical life is so slight that he should take special care lest he should slip out of his bodily sheath before the due time.' This seemed sufficiently accurate to justify a further experiment, which I asked and received permission to make.

When next meeting this lady at the house of a mutual friend, I came prepared with four letters which had been placed in identical envelopes. These were handed to an assistant, who was asked to select one from the packet and pass it to the psychometrist. The letter was not scrutinised by the latter, but pressed against her forehead during the giving of the description. Removing to the far end of the room, I sat with my back to the others and wrote down what was said. When the first letter had been psychometrised it was replaced in its envelope and a number pencilled thereon corresponding to the number heading my notes. This method avoided my knowing, during progress of the experiment, which letter was being psychometrised. The second and third were treated similarly. Thus I obtained three psychometric descriptions without knowing which letters were being dealt with. Only at the close of the experiment was it possible to pair the letters with their descriptions.

The results, although not entirely correct, were sufficiently striking:—

## *The Significance of Successful Tests and*

1. The writer of number one was said to be artistic to an unusual degree. This was true; she is a professional singer and a remarkably gifted amateur sketcher.

2. Number two was said to have been written by one who was often in a beautiful garden containing a large sheet of ornamental water. This also was correct; its writer lived at that time in a mansion standing in its park and having extensive gardens of unusual variety and beauty, including a boating lake. Only two of my friends had a lake in their grounds, and this was one of them.

3. The third letter was said to have been written by an excessively tired person. For a few moments the psychometrist could give no more information, and expressed the fear that the feeling of weariness would prevent reception of further impressions. However she presently added (and it sounded illogical) that the writer appeared to be a boy at school. I discovered, on comparing the letters, that this came from a young nephew then at Dover College, and I wondered if a chance glimpse of the boyish handwriting might have suggested the idea that the writer was a schoolboy; but there was nothing to account for the reference to weariness, which I concluded must be wrong. It was not until recounting this experiment in his home that I learnt its applicability. My nephew surprised me by exclaiming, 'That is perfectly true. I always write my letters when too tired to do anything else. I had come in from afternoon football, and wrote to you before tea.'

## *Note upon Psychometry*

I should not care to base an argument upon data so meagre, but offer the above in illustration of the definitions given of Psychometry. One of the earliest and probably still one of the best books upon the subject is that entitled, *The Soul of Things*, written by Professor Denton in 1884,<sup>1</sup> who, finding that his wife and son possessed the power, made prolonged experiment. It is to be desired that others would conduct equally careful experiments with this elusive faculty.

Mrs. Leonard has made few attempts in psychometry, and those few have not given her encouragement to pursue that for which she apparently has no ability.

It seems safe to assume that no psychometric power in Mrs. Leonard, even were she to hold one's hand, which she does not, could account for information being given which was unknowable at the time by the sitter and which subsequently proves correct.

Besides which, it is difficult to see why, supposing appropriate matter could be obtained by Mrs. Leonard from my mind, or psychometrically from my person, there is so often an insuperable difficulty in giving names and other simple items which are familiar to me. It is a curious experience, after having received correct references to pages of books scattered about one's library, to hear the control struggling to spell out a name which I know to be the one inevitably required for completing some explicit description. Such efforts usually fail to

<sup>1</sup> Published by Denton Publishing Co., Wellesley, Mass.

## *The Significance of Successful Tests*

pass beyond the initial letter of the required name; nor does my concentration upon that name appear to make things one whit the easier. It has often seemed, during such episodes, that things *not within my knowledge* are more easily transmitted than the things which I know. This frequent failure to obtain from the sitter well-known names and information, would, on the psychometric hypothesis of book tests, be a phenomenon requiring explanation.

This slight note upon Psychometry may fittingly close with the following extract from Sir William Barrett's book, *Psychical Research*, page 198:—

‘Certain sensitives are said to be able to detect, or “psychometrise,” as they call it, the influence left on material objects worn by an absent or deceased person. Whether this be the case or not, there are some startling and well-attested phenomena related by the elder mesmerists which apparently indicate that some specific influence is left on a material object by the passes of a mesmerizer. The scientific objections to a specific effluence are perhaps not so formidable now that we are acquainted with certain physical and psychical facts that would have been deemed utterly incredible a century ago.’



## CHAPTER XX

### NEWSPAPER TESTS AS VIEWED FROM THE OTHER SIDE

IT was in October, 1919, that I first heard of newspaper tests, one from the *Morning Post* being shown to me by friends whom I had introduced to Mrs. Leonard. At my next sitting Feda commenced to speak about this, and stated that my father had suggested it to their communicator, and had now come prepared to give me one from the *Times*. The accompanying remarks were, in substance, as follows:—

‘ These tests have been devised by others in a more advanced sphere than mine, and I have caught their ideas. This may be done even when we do not realise whence the thought originates, much as when minds on earth receive inspiration. We can visit these higher helpers, and, even when away from them, may be very conscious of their assistance. I am not yet aware exactly how one obtains these tests, and have wondered whether the higher guides exert some influence whereby a suitable advertisement comes into position on the convenient date; I have thought of this, but do not know. These tests will be better than the book tests, because more definite, and their object will be to prove that we can obtain information *from other quarters* than the mind

### *Newspaper Tests as Viewed from the Other Side*

or surroundings of the sitter; it will be useless to invoke "the subconscious mind" as an explanation here. I was taken to the *Times* office, and did not find the way there by myself; helpers are plentiful when we are engaged on work of this kind.'

This first test from the *Times* was strikingly successful, and I noticed that the test words chosen lay in groups, several occurring close together. Remarking upon this at the next sitting, I was told that I might assume they would often be found thus, as a small area was concentrated upon and the other areas ignored, unless some chance word there happened to catch the attention. When one patch had been scrutinised another might be selected if necessary.

While giving the third set of these messages, my communicator remarked:—

'You will notice from the items selected that there is both a personal and an impersonal class. It is the personal interest that attracts me and suggests a particular test, and it is much easier to form a test when I can see a personal association in it. These will prove to be the best in my selection.'

A glance at the tests of this period shows how strikingly true this was, family names and associations being the subject of nearly all the better results.

I did not at this time realise that the three sets

### *Newspaper Tests as Viewed from the Other Side*

of newspaper tests already received were the precursors of a long series; but it became evident that the communicator so regarded them, for he contrived to combine a statement on this point with an italicised remark in the *Windsor Magazine* for December, 1919. I had requested that we might have a change from the *Times*, lest there should be given cause for the criticism that restriction to one paper suggested some sort of collusion. I had looked ahead, and found that I was due to sit with Mrs. Leonard on a date some five days before the *Windsor Magazine* would be published. I therefore requested that tests might be selected from that magazine. The suggestion was accepted willingly, and on November 21st, in addition to the *Times* tests, came six from the *Windsor*, of which five proved accurate. Among them was the following:—

‘On page 10, disregarding advertisements and counting from the beginning of the reading matter, there is a personal message commencing about one-quarter down on the left side. Take it as a message particularly applicable just now in view of the fact that you are starting upon a most important part of your psychic investigations.’

One-quarter down this page was a short statement set out by itself and printed in italics; it commenced close to the left side with the words, ‘This story is the first of a series . . .’ Omitting the word ‘story,’ and taking it as a personal message, I gathered that it had been selected in order to serve as a statement that *these tests would form a*

### *Newspaper Tests as Viewed from the Other Side*

series. As I have now been receiving them regularly for two years, that promise has been abundantly fulfilled.

It should be added that several days elapsed after this sitting before I was able to obtain a copy of the *Windsor Magazine*.

The year 1920 represents a second stage in the experimenter's endeavour to explain to me, and apparently to understand more fully for himself, the problem of these tests. During the early period there had been little said to suggest that the method used differed greatly from that pursued in obtaining book tests.

But in January, 1920, the opinion was expressed that sometimes when obtaining material for these tests there was seen neither metal type nor printed paragraph, but 'something different.' This 'something different' the communicator did not at first know how to designate, and it was termed 'the spirit, ghost, or etheric duplicate of the word,' or its 'aura,' and we finally agreed to employ the term 'etheric duplicate.' He expressed himself as deeply interested in the problem, and desirous of investigating it further. By the following November his views had progressed, as will be observed from the following notes of a conversation in that month:—

'Sometimes in getting these tests I think I am seeing, when really it is not something seen, but the operation of a power of materialising the thought of it; I see, not the thing itself, but something which I have created

## *Newspaper Tests as Viewed from the Other Side*

through sensing it. Perhaps photography provides an apt illustration, when you can only see the picture as you proceed to develop the plate; I am now able to develop the idea sensed until it becomes visible to me. But more than this, I have glimpsed an idea which I should much like to work out more fully, namely, that I can in this way see things which are *shortly going to be*. It is much as when you realise the coming of a man whose shadow you see approaching round a corner; since the shadow suggests the man, you know that a man will almost immediately appear. It seems to me that we on this side have a power, capable of development, by which it is possible to interpret the "shadows" of things to be, but not actually existing at the moment. I have seen shadows, and thought them the actual objects themselves. I fear you will find it difficult to grasp this.'

I asked:—

'What produces this "shadow" of the object?'

He replied:—

'That is exactly what I wish to discover. I suspect, but am not sure, that whatever is about to materialise on earth has its spiritual counterpart, which is reflected, say, on the atmosphere or ether, but not visible to all. Admitting that each *object* may have such counterpart, you will ask how an *event* yet to happen can have its spiritual counterpart?'



## *Newspaper Tests as Viewed from the Other Side*

I think in the same way that an intention may be sensed by a sensitive before it is put into action by the sitter. Sometimes when a man proposes to commit murder his intended victim feels a sense of impending danger. Animals feel this even more than do human beings, sensing what is about to happen. Now the things I see are frequently but the spiritual counterparts of things which are about to take form; some of my tests from the *Times* might be called shadows of a substance. When you see a shadow it is but an outline, and you do not look for detail, and that explains the difficulty of these tests; we cannot always sufficiently observe detail.'

Twelve months after the above conversation the subject was again referred to on my asking how the mistake could occur of saying that he saw the word 'rain' in a particular position of the next day's paper: he had missed the two middle letters of the word, which proved to be 'raisin.' The remarks arising from my inquiry were, in substance, as follows:—

'I cannot always see these words. Book tests were easier to do, probably because the books were always present; whereas it is otherwise with newspaper tests, which must therefore be obtained in another manner.'

I asked:—

'Do you now understand what it actually is that you operate upon at the *Times* office?'

*Newspaper Tests as Viewed from the Other Side*

He replied:—

‘ It is still a puzzle. On one occasion I thought I saw the complete page set up; it certainly appeared to be so, and I noticed certain items in it which I believe proved correct. But on returning to the office a little while after—for I frequently go twice to make more sure of the tests—I found that the page was not yet set up, and this astonished me and was most perplexing.’

I asked:—

‘ Do you understand it now ? ’

He replied:—

‘ No, not quite. You will recollect my once remarking that I seemed sometimes to be getting the shadow of what was going to be. Now when in my own sphere it is easy to distinguish between a thing and its thought-form, but when I am working on your plane it is not so easy to tell the difference. For example, on getting a thought from your mind I may be uncertain whether it relates to something already done, or to something you intend doing. I find myself helped or hindered by conditions in obtaining these tests. Recollect what was previously said about “the coming event casting its shadow before,” and also about the “etheric duplicate.” I will investigate further.’

The above was given through Fedá, but later

*Newspaper Tests as Viewed from the Other Side*

in the sitting, when my father was controlling, he again alluded to the subject, and said:—

‘ When the test items are chosen they are not yet existing in the form they will have taken when the paper is published, and so I have to put myself in a position to know that which *will be*, rather than that which is. You will naturally wish to learn how I can be aware of the position these items will assume on the printed page? Of course my calculations may be wrong or the positions may be changed subsequently. I am able to sense what appear to me to be sheets and slips of paper with names and various information upon them. I notice suitable items and, afterwards, visualise a duplicate of the page with these items falling into their places. At first I was unable to do this. It seems to me that it is an ability which throws some light upon foretelling, a visualising of what *is to be*, but based upon that which *already is*. Now suppose I wished to give the name “ Thomas ” as a test; unless it were already upon some paper at the office I should not be able to get it. But should I discover that it is among the names received for insertion, I next attempt to visualise it in the position which it is to take upon the page in question.’

I then asked:—

‘ How can you ascertain whether the name has reached the office ? ’

He said:—

‘ I think I get it from the letters, for I

### *Newspaper Tests as Viewed from the Other Side*

certainly seem to see many pieces of paper and to obtain many things from them. But the important operation is the subsequent visualising. Should this theory of mine be right, I think it will presently be demonstrated by examination of these tests; for it should be possible to give items verifiable from the paper for the next day but one.'

I asked:—

'Do you think that could be done with advertisements which had not yet reached the office?'

He replied:—

'It might be more difficult. But to return to my method; I get information that certain words will be used, for I sense them on the premises. Frequently I have sensed a few items from letters and then visualised the paper, when they fell into position; and sometimes I see further detail upon visualising which I had not sensed from the letters. These latter seem to come in as an afterthought, but are usually connected with the primary items. Suppose I got "Charles," and then visualised it as appearing at the top of column two; I might also get a name "D" close by it, of which I had not been conscious previously, but which appears to me now owing to its being connected with the "Charles" advertisement. This is most difficult to explain.'

In the early period it was supposed by both of us that the later the hour of the sitting the more

### *Newspaper Tests as Viewed from the Other Side*

accurate would be the tests. Experience, however, modified this view, and it became apparent that there were other conditions of success far more important than the time of day. In March, 1921, my father said:—

‘ I think there is little difference whether your sitting is in the afternoon or evening, for my conclusion is that I do not obtain the tests from the actual preparations for printing. What I certainly know is, that, when I go to the office, whether earlier or later, I can feel that certain matter is there and that its position in the paper will be so-and-so. Although I use the word “ feel,” yet it is also a “ seeing.” Consider how with sensation on earth all is feeling first, but if carried further, consciousness reaches the stage of seeing and hearing. Men say, “ I see,” when they grasp an idea. They imply that they see with the mind’s eye. I think that what I experience is an extension of that. But remember it is imperative that I have something upon which to work, for I cannot see with my mind’s eye a condition which is not present there. I can only see or feel that for which there is a foundation.’

During our last conversation, before the writing of this chapter, the subject was further alluded to, consequent upon my saying that curiosity had been expressed as to how the *Times* tests were obtained. My father replied:—

‘ I fear that nothing you may say will enable a full comprehension ; for they are



## *Newspaper Tests as Viewed from the Other Side*

done by a process not easy for those on earth to follow, and which relates to "a near future which is a present," somewhat symbolised by the shadow seen of a man round a corner. I think there is an etheric foreshadowing—if one may use the expression—of things about to be done. Remember that, although the words may not be yet in type, some one's thoughts are on them, some one has formulated the wording of the notices sent to the office for insertion. I used to remark, when giving book tests, that it was easier to sense books that had been read, for it seemed as though the reader's thought remained in the book, possibly in some auric form; but should you begin to explain *that* to people generally, they would not understand it. On the whole, I think the method used for newspaper tests may be said to depend upon "an ability to psychometrise the ever-present NOW." Not every spirit could do this; it is a power which has to be developed.

I inquired:—

‘How do you get the exact position of the word you want?’

He replied:—

‘By a slight extension of what I have just tried to describe. It would probably be impossible to get anything very far ahead, but only within a certain number of hours, and I cannot say how many.’

*Newspaper Tests as Viewed from the Other Side*

I said:—

‘ Perhaps you can only obtain such information as has already arrived at the office ? ’

He answered:—

‘ Possibly something might be got from an advertisement on its way to the office, if the sender were thinking strongly of it at the time when I was there selecting tests; for like attracts like, and a certain degree of link would have been formed for me by my contact with the advertisements already at the office. It is all very interesting. I scarcely think it would be possible to get a test for the day after the morrow, or, even if possible, that it could result in more than a jumble of the morrow’s with a few of the day following.

Upon my repeating a previously asked question as to whether he felt the words and occasionally also saw them, he replied that this was a sufficiently correct description of what seemed to him to be a crystallising or materialising of thought.

The above extracts and summaries may suffice to indicate the trend of many conversations we have had upon the subject. Students may complain that too little information has been laid before them, while others will doubtless have taken advantage of their right to skip less interesting portions. A third class of critic may be too polite to express their opinion, but I naturally assume that some will take the easy path by assuring themselves that this chapter describes merely the

### *Newspaper Tests as Viewed from the Other Side*

manner in which I have been bluffed by the medium. If these should be open to considerations of logic, they are asked to recollect that, during two years, I have held some twenty-four conversations with my communicator upon this phase of the subject, and in these talks I was not asking him to propound theories, but merely *to explain accomplished facts*.

Certain information given the previous day was found accurate in the Public Press next morning. My notes were posted overnight and are retained by the Society for Psychical Research. Those notes may be compared with the issues of the *Times* to which they refer by any who desire to make the verification for themselves. The proportion of success obtained presents a striking and inexplicable phenomenon, one that is, I think, unique in the history of psychic studies, and one that challenges inquiry as to how it was accomplished. No theories of fraud or collusion can be maintained in face of the hundreds of tests received during the years following October, 1919, and a consideration of their relevancy to things not within the medium's knowledge. They must be either ignored or considered in their bearing upon extra-mundane agency. My communicator asserts that they were specially devised to compel recognition of the latter. He is aware of the argument that the medium may have developed a faculty of seeing at a distance, and has therefore taken pains to give sufficient tests of such a character as to compel a different explanation, tests involving his memory of days long past. Of these he says,—

## *Newspaper Tests as Viewed from the Other Side*

‘ I think they should impress people more than book tests. If I came here and confined myself to giving my recollections, it might be put down to telepathy from your mind. But since I refer you to the morrow’s paper for items which accord with what is told you here, it becomes clear that telepathy cannot explain; you find in the paper that for which you seek, but given in a form which you did not expect and about which you could, in the nature of the case, have known nothing. Two sets of memory are combined to produce them, my memories of long ago, and my memory of what I found this morning among preparations for the Press.’

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE IDENTITY OF THE COMMUNICATOR

THE transmission of names through Feda presents considerable difficulty, for notwithstanding brilliant successes in which a fresh name has been caught correctly, she usually shows some hesitancy and bewilderment, whether the name is being communicated to her by sound or by its spelling; in fact, we usually save time by taking the initial letter and leaving it at that, trusting to time or the context to throw further light. But by the newspaper method it is not necessary for Feda to know the name required; she transmits a description showing where it can be found in the *Times* next morning, together with such statements as define the person with whom the name is linked for the occasion. In this way we have in a large number of instances been able quite easily to get the name required.

During the two and a half years of investigation which preceded the appearance of newspaper tests, the communicator had abundantly proved to me that I was really in communication with my father, and that I was neither misled by an easy credulity nor victimised by impersonation. With the advent of this new type of evidence I quickly noticed how skilfully it was used to give additional proof of



## *The Identity of the Communicator*

identity. The 'Leek tests' will be remembered in this connection; but even before the date of the first of those references, in fact from the beginning of the series, I had received messages involving intimate knowledge of family names, present and past, such as no stranger could easily obtain.

Many of these will have been noticed among the instances previously given; their number is considerable, and the following may suffice to illustrate the general character of the whole. Brief notes are appended showing the relevancy of each test together with its verification.

There are retained, here and there, incidental items which have little interest save their accurately foretold position in relation to others which they serve to link together.

*October 10th, 1919, at 3 p.m.*

This was the sitting at which the newspaper tests commenced. They were to be verified from the first page of the *Times* for the following day. Among them was the following:—

'He has the idea that soap is mentioned at the top of the page.'

As the word 'soap' did not appear upon this page, I concluded that the test had failed. At the next sitting I made some remarks about the general success of the newspaper tests, but did not allude to this particular one until Feda inquired if there had not been an item described as near the top of

## *The Identity of the Communicator*

the page? I said, 'Yes, a mention of soap, but that one failed.'

She continued:—

'He says it was *the name* of a famous soap-maker; he sensed it, and so did not know whether soap was mentioned or some name suggesting soap; he was just reminded of it.'

Twenty years previously we had known a family, some members of whom were engaged in the manufacture of soap. We had been interested in hearing details of the process, and in after years any reference to that well-known firm brought to mind our associations with this family. Looking again at the paper, *I discovered this family name prominent among notices at the top of the first column.* May it not be an instance of mental association, the familiar name bringing to my communicator the idea of soap which was so strongly linked in our minds with that family? At the next sitting after this, I put a question:—

'There was a name in the paper which is that of a soap-manufacturer, but can he say anything more as to what he connects with that name?'

Feda replied:—

'It does not suggest soap now, but in a time gone by. Not some one's soap, but *some one* whom he knew when on earth and knew well.'

*The Identity of the Communicator*

I asked:—

‘Where and who?’

The reply was:—

‘Yes, he knows, but cannot get it through.’

The interest of these answers centres around the fact that a lady of this name, and related to the soap-manufacturers, *had been engaged to a member of our family*. We all knew her well during the years 1897 to 1900. Apart from this family, we had known no one connected with soap manufacture.

At this sitting the number of tests given for verification from the morrow’s *Times* was six. Of these four were found to be correct, one was inconclusive, and one failed.

*November 21st, 1919, at 3 p.m.*

The number of tests given for verification from the front page of the morrow’s *Times* was thirteen.

Result: Correct 6; Inconclusive 1; Failure 6.

After allusion to something one-third down the second column, the test continued:—

‘Also in the near vicinity is the name of a place in which Mr. Hine resided.’

We had been conversing at a previous sitting about this gentleman who, forty years ago, was the personal friend of my father, and a prominent official in his church at Baldock in Hertfordshire. As he had long ago removed to London, I was

## *The Identity of the Communicator*

uncertain which place might be intended, and was interested next morning to find at the top of the second column the old and familiar address, *Baldock, Herts.*

*February 27th, 1920, at 3.30 p.m.*

The number of tests given for verification from the front page of the morrow's *Times* was eleven.

Result: Correct 4; Inconclusive 6; Failure 1.

'About the middle of column one there is named a place of which your mother was very fond in her girlhood. She spent very happy times there, and may remember two elderly ladies there.'

At the spot named occurs '*I. of W.*' The Isle of Wight was my mother's native place: the two elderly ladies were my mother's mother and aunt.

'Quite close is a name suggesting music to him.'

Two inches below is the name *Harper*, which may be thought of as one who plays upon the harp. It served to link the previous test with the following.

'Near this is his own name, and very close indeed, probably in the same advertisement, is the name of a near relative of your wife's, one who has passed over.'

In the advertisement next above *Harper* is

### *The Identity of the Communicator*

*Thomas*, and also *Frances*. My wife has an aunt *Frances*, now passed over.

‘Fold the page across so as to divide it into equal halves right and left, and in the first complete column beyond the crease, to the right, and less than a quarter down, is a message from him to your mother.’ (I asked, ‘How shall I be sure which it is?’) ‘Close to it is a name or initials which would fit very well.’

Exactly where stated is an advertisement in which occur the words, *Portland . . . Anxious to get in touch*, and in the adjoining parallel advertisement is the following line twice repeated: *I.W. and D. and I.W.T.* All this fits peculiarly well. One of my father’s early circuits was Portland; we always think of it in connection with things he told us about his residence there, and we have no associations with it apart from him. That he is anxious to get in touch with my mother is clear from his frequent allusions and messages to her in these sittings. The initials are applicable. His name was Drayton, and when living in the Isle of Wight he married, and my mother’s maiden name was Dore. Thus the initials may be interpreted either as ‘Isle of Wight and Drayton, and Isle of Wight and Thomas,’ or, indicating my mother’s change of name there, ‘Isle of Wight and Dore, and Isle of Wight and Thomas.’ So it will be seen that the initials and the place-name are equally suitable as the directions indicated they would be.



## *The Identity of the Communicator*

*August 13th, 1920, at 5.55 p.m.*

The number of tests given for verification from the front page of the morrow's *Times* was nine.

Result: Correct 5; Inconclusive 4.

Following a test to be found a little way down column two:—

‘ A little lower is the name of one of the first places where they lived after his marriage. He likes these tests which go back some time and require thinking out.’

Three inches lower in the parallel column is *Victoria*, the name of his first church and locality after marriage. The name had appeared previously in these tests (see page 95), where it was connected with my birthplace.

*August 20th, 1920, at 7.20 p.m.*

The number of tests given for verification from the front page of the morrow's *Times* was eight.

Result: Correct 6; Inconclusive 2.

‘ A little below half-way down column one is the name of some people whom your mother has lately seen. The word “seen” is not quite appropriate, say “been reminded of” or “been in contact with.” Your father knew these people when on earth.’

The name *Georgina* appears in the place designated. It is the name of a lady who is one of my parents' oldest friends, and she had been staying with my mother a few weeks previously. The use

### *The Identity of the Communicator*

of the plural is appropriate, as the visit was arranged by correspondence with the lady's daughter, who was also a friend of my father. As far back as I can remember, we always alluded to this lady as 'Georgie,' short for Georgina, her proper name.

*September 3rd, 1920, at 3.45 p.m.*

The number of tests given for verification from the first page of the morrow's *Times* was six.

Result: Correct 4; Inconclusive 2.

Before giving these tests there was an unsuccessful effort to tell me the surname of a minister who had worked with my father. The name was given as the Rev. Benjamin B——, but Feda could not catch the final name in full. When I asked for the locality in which they had worked together, I was informed that this, and also the surname, were to be made the subjects of tests. Towards the close of the sitting my father, while controlling, gave the name as 'Browne.' We remember the Rev. Benjamin Browne, in conjunction with whom my father carried through an important educational enterprise about the year 1884. In our family, when referring to this gentleman, it had been our almost invariable custom to use both names, Benjamin Browne. This test was phrased as follows:—

'In column one and about one-third down is the surname of the Reverend Benjamin.'

It appears just below half-way down in *the Rev. Benson-Brown*.

### *The Identity of the Communicator*

‘He is not quite sure about the following, as he did not see, but sensed it. Lower in this column he thinks there is named the place very near to which we knew the above. It may even be the name of the very place, but if not it is just as good, as it is so close; yet he hopes it may prove to be the right name.’

Low in this column, less than an inch from the bottom, appears *Kent*. We lived in Kent when first knowing this minister, who then resided at Margate.

*October 1st, 1920, at 4.12 p.m.*

The number of tests given for verification from the first page of the morrow’s *Times* was eleven.

Result: Correct 4; Inconclusive 3; Failure 4.

‘About one-quarter down column two is the name George.’

This is correct.

‘A name looking like Ratcliffe is close to it. He knew one of that name.’

In 1896–7 my father devoted considerable attention to matters of Connexional Law on behalf of one of his church workers named Ratcliffe, concerning whose status in the church there was an acute controversy. He often alluded to the matter in later years, as it was one of the outstanding incidents in his ministerial career. The name

### *The Identity of the Communicator*

appears one inch lower than 'George' in the parallel column, viz., column one.

'A quarter down column three; near this is reference to writing, either words or something amounting to the same thing.'

Commencing one-quarter down column three the word *Write* occurs five times within the space of three inches.

At an early period of this sitting reference had been made to a relation named Norah, and it was said that this name would be introduced among the tests for the day. Only when typing out my notes did I realise that this test had been omitted. At the next sitting, therefore, I mentioned the omission, saying :—

'When I asked about Norah during our previous sitting, you said that the name was being introduced in that day's tests; but it was not mentioned.'

The following reply was given without hesitation:—

'There was a test in which Norah should have figured. I had intended to give it. The name came in the second column, and I think it was nearly half-way down.'

It is exactly  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches short of half-way down column two. Here we have a hint that communicators may forget to give some of the items with which they come prepared.

*The Identity of the Communicator*

*January 7th, 1921, at 6.50 p.m.*

The number of tests given for verification from the first page of the morrow's *Times* was nine.

Result: Correct 7; Failure 2.

After a reference to something in the upper part of column two, he added:—

‘Quite close is my name and that of another on my side the family.’

Exactly an inch above a quarter down this column, and in the same notice, appear the names *John* (his own name) and *Mary* (his sister's).

‘In column one, three-quarters down, is the name of a place in which we lived some years ago; but given in connection with it is the name of a friend who did not live in that place, but in one where we had lived previously.’

Exactly where described appears *Louisa*, and, immediately beneath it, *Herts*. We resided in Hertfordshire in 1876–8, *after leaving Leek*, at which latter place lived Louisa, my father's mother. The phrasing of this test again illustrates Feda's way of terming counties ‘places,’ and relations ‘friends,’ unless the communicator happens to notice the slip and correct it.

After giving a test one-quarter down column five, Feda continued:—

‘Lower in that column there seemed to be



### *The Identity of the Communicator*

a reference to a place abroad, about which he and your mother had conversed when he was on earth.'

This might seem a rather vague description, but it was verified by the names *Australia* and *Sydney* coming immediately beneath the preceding test-words. There had once been much discussion of Sydney, Australia, when a family connection, who lived there, visited England and spent a holiday with us. He was our only link with the place.

*January 20th, 1921, at 3.45 p.m.*

The number of tests given for verification from the first page of the morrow's *Times* was nine.

Result: Correct 8; Inconclusive 1.

After an allusion to something three inches down the third column of the usual front page of the *Times*, he proceeded:—

'A little above is a name which was well known in the family in former days, and just about the same place is a name given in abbreviated form, one well known in the family too.'

This is perfectly met by the name *Benjamin*, which appears one inch from the top of column three, and by the letter 'C' in the top line. It is a capital 'C' standing by itself, and evidently intended to represent a person's name. We have long used it thus: an allusion to 'C' would be instantly understood in our family circle.

### *The Identity of the Communicator*

‘In the upper part of column two is named a place in which you lived when you were connected with conditions in which Margaret would be specially interested.’

Two inches from the top is *I. of W.* When living at Newport, I. of W., I was engaged in the same kind of business as that pursued by my Aunt Margaret’s father in his earlier life. There is clear hint of identity here ; for it was only by referring to family letters that I discovered this fact about my Aunt Margaret’s father, whereas it would have been well known to my father.

‘Very close is named a second place, which you knew well when living at the first place; you would go to it, hear of it, and think of it.’

The next word was *Ventnor*, and the statement about it is correct.

I shall be reminded by the credulous and timid that the parade of names culled from books of reference, or collected by diligent inquiry, is a favourite device of impostors and impersonators on earth, and may be similarly used by such persons when they pass into the next stage of existence and seek to enliven its hours by playing tricks upon those who try to communicate with their loved ones through mediums. These timid critics usually know nothing by first-hand experience,

### *The Identity of the Communicator*

but belong to the 'fearful and unbelieving' class, to whom discovery and advance in any department of human activity owes little or nothing. Their imagination pictures devils who would seem to be exceedingly wise and capable, while 'the spirits of just men made perfect' are made to appear inactive or impotent. They grant too little scope for the strength of healthy intelligence and personal affection in the affairs of both worlds, putting a trust which is almost pathetic in their own imaginings and reserving too little for the Ruler of the Universe, whose name is Love and who gives His angels charge concerning us. The incident connected with our Lord's transfiguration is not allowed its due weight with them; they are upon much more congenial ground with the text, 'We are not ignorant of his devices.'

Neither in Scripture nor in experience is there basis for supposing that agents of evil are omniscient. Give them sufficient scope and they reveal themselves in due course; deceit cannot be kept up indefinitely.

My communicator has consistently transmitted messages (or spoken them himself when dispensing with Feda's aid) for more than five years, during which time we have had one hundred conversations of about two hours each. I say 'consistently,' meaning that he has spoken as my father would speak, whether referring to his days on earth, his friends, my work and surroundings, or his own aspirations. The personality rings true, and in the many slight touches and turns of thought,

### *The Identity of the Communicator*

which cannot easily be reproduced in print, there is nothing which jars upon the sensitive perception of close relationship.

The additional evidence of identity afforded by the advent of newspaper test-messages could easily be displayed at such length as to weary all but the most determined readers. Perhaps sufficient has been given to explain the conviction that I am in touch with my own father. As month followed month, and scarcely a sitting passed without references to names, correctly indicated, revealing a knowledge of our friends such as I should expect my father to retain, my impression steadily strengthened that no one but he could have devised these tests.

It is not the case that a number of names are given on the chance that some of them may be appropriate ; there is no 'fishing' for names, no vague suggestions such as might be applicable to almost any sitter; my communicator evidences an intimate knowledge of our relations and friends, and succeeds by means of this new type of test in introducing numbers of names that had neither been transmitted previously nor mentioned in the hearing of the medium when awake.

The impression made upon me has been cumulative and logically compelling. I am convinced that it is no other than my own father who has repeatedly succeeded in giving proof positive of his identity.

## CHAPTER XXII

### CONCLUDING REMARKS UPON THE EVIDENCE AFFORDED BY NEWSPAPER TESTS, AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

It will have been noticed that while some of these tests are mere statements of what will be in the morrow's Press, others go beyond this and reveal intimate acquaintance with our family, and recollections of my father's earthly life. Telepathy-from-the-living is a theory which breaks down in face of these experiments. Could any such hypothesis explain the method by which knowledge of our relations, and recollections of long ago, became interwoven with forecasts from the next day's newspaper?

It is certain that many of these forecasts have been correct, but whether they were obtained by normal or super-normal means is not the chief question; for a further line of information is apparent, information upon matters which even unimpeded access to the offices of the *Times* could not give, and which the medium can scarcely be supposed to possess.

The problem is this: *How do these two streams of knowledge become merged?*

There is cumulative evidence by which I am logically compelled to the conclusion that the intelligence, who communicates with me through



### *Concluding Remarks upon the Evidence*

Mrs. Leonard, succeeds in obtaining items from the preparations for the next day's paper, and, already possessing full knowledge of our family history, composes an amalgam of the two for the very definite purpose of demonstrating his identity.

It may also be said of these newspaper tests, as of the book tests which preceded them, that they were introduced by intelligence other than our own, and neither asked for nor anticipated by us. They reveal that complete remembrance of family and other names which we should expect our friends to retain, but which the limitations and confusions of ordinary trance mediumship afford them but small opportunity of demonstrating.

It is important to realise the relation between these tests and other parts of the conversation taking place during Mrs. Leonard's trance. These tests occupy but a small fraction of the two hours' talk, yet they serve the important use of giving presumptive evidence that the unverifiable matters alluded to so freely are not dream-utterances of Mrs. Leonard's mind. Since evidential matter proves correct, one may presume that the unevidential portions are, broadly, accurate also, since they originate from the same source.

These intimate talks with my father afford frequent evidence that he is in close touch with my doings and thoughts, as well as with those of his friends still on earth. They often yield fresh proofs of his identity. They give him opportunity to explain some of the difficulties which attend

### *Concluding Remarks upon the Evidence*

verbal communication between the two worlds, and they consequently offer a hope of lessening these, by facilitating a fuller understanding of the laws by which such communication takes place. Wise counsels, such as a father might be expected to offer, in view of his wider survey of life and its meaning, are given from time to time, together with encouragement and suggestion in relation to my work. He also attempts to describe the occupations and felicity of his present state. Occasionally he assists newly-arrived spirits to communicate with their relations whom I may have taken with me for that purpose; in this way we have been able to bring consolation and happiness to sorrowing lives, and incidentally to furnish additional proof of the possibility of communicating with the departed.

On account of the intense interest of my conversations with those on life's Other Side and its reaction, wholly refreshing and uplifting, upon everyday life, I often find myself wishing that these experiences could be shared by others, and especially by those who, like myself, are engaged in Christian and philanthropic work. But, for the present, it seems inevitable that the many who have no opportunities must be content to learn from the few who enjoy facilities for this study. Into the causes responsible for the scarcity of opportunity I need not here enter; they are such as may in time be remedied, and the spread of accurate knowledge will be a step towards this achievement.

Meanwhile there come unsought, to one here and there, experiences which are startling or puzzling,

### *and its Significance*

illuminating or terrifying, according to the individuality of the receiver. It may be suspected that the psychic gifts in the observer, which make these spontaneous phenomena possible, would facilitate direct communication with the next world, were such communication desired and sought by appropriate methods.

Others are naturally so endowed with psychic gifts that they enjoy, throughout their lives, some measure of visual, auditory, or impressional contact with that spiritual environment to which the five senses are unresponsive. Such people are usually sufficiently discreet to speak little of these experiences, and then only to understanding and sympathetic friends, else would the world be astonished to learn how much of communication comes direct and even unsought.

There is yet one other class of persons who have touch with the life above us, a touch which is wholly spiritual and rarely, if ever, takes form in vision, word, or other physical manifestation. I allude to those enjoying a sense of communion with a Higher Intelligence. Often it takes the form of guidance when they are in perplexity; of uplift and comfort in times of sorrow; or, best of all, the realisation of peace and harmony in their relation to the Deity. It is the experience desired for all Christian people in the words of the Benediction: *the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with us all evermore. Amen.*

In this highest experience we have *communion* rather than *communication*. It is certain that verbal communication may be had with those spirits who

*Concluding Remarks upon the Evidence*

are our own friends ascended to the next stage of life in the realms unseen by human eye; yet such intercourse by words is only possible under circumstances, the laws of which are as yet too little investigated and understood. But the wordless communion which innumerable people experience, whether with the Spirit of their Master, or with 'the spirits of just men made perfect,' their arisen friends and guardian angels, is, one believes, within the reach of every man who humbly, and in prayerful trust, seeks the experience.

Tennyson's allusion to this communion with his friend Arthur H. Hallam may be recalled:—

' I shall not see thee. Dare I say  
    No spirit ever brake the band  
    That stays him from the native land,  
Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay ?

No visual shade of some one lost,  
    But he, the Spirit himself, may come  
    Where all the nerve of sense is numb;  
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range  
    With gods in un conjectured bliss,  
    O, from the distance of the abyss  
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear  
    The wish too strong for words to name;  
    That in this blindness of the frame  
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.'

*and its Significance*

And in the stanza next following (xciii *In Memoriam*) is given sage counsel respecting the state of mind and emotion essential for such communion :—

‘ How pure at heart and sound in head,  
    With what divine affections bold  
    Should be the man whose thought would  
        hold

An hour’s communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call  
    The spirits from their golden day,  
    Except, like them, thou too canst say,  
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,  
    Imaginations calm and fair,  
    The memory like a cloudless air,  
The conscience as a sea at rest :

But when the heart is full of din,  
    And doubt beside the portal waits,  
    They can but listen at the gates,  
And hear the household jar within.’

Wordless communion is for all, verbal communications are, at present, within the reach of few.

The peaceful mind, looking to heaven with adoration and trust, and regarding earth with a practical love that gives service, sympathy and hope for all—such interior condition facilitates that spiritual communion which is the highest and the best, and which brings its own demonstration of immortality to those experiencing its joy.



### *Concluding Remarks upon the Evidence*

The verbal communications treated of in this book are another thing, doubtless a much lesser thing, and yet of a value to life and religion all too little realised by the Churches. I am well aware that many Christians who read these pages will think that my proofs are unnecessary to them; for since they already possess something better, they can take on trust all I set forth to prove. There are, however, innumerable persons to whom the experience of, or even the belief in, verbal communication with departed friends would be a step towards the realisation of that higher communion of which I have spoken. Assurance of the possibility of communication would remove mental uncertainties, and afford a strong incentive to endeavours after that communion which is found by those who seek in sincerity, seeing that 'He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being.'

The fact of having spoken with friends who have left earth refreshes and enlarges one's conviction of the possibilities of communion with the Master who left earth some nineteen centuries ago, and who encouraged His followers to keep in touch with Him, promising that on His part He would not fail to keep in touch with them. Faith in the activity and interest of the One is revived by demonstrations of the activity and affectionate interest of the many who have followed Him into Realms Unseen.

It has been said by ignorant and timid people that psychic studies are hurtful. The obvious

### *and its Significance*

reply is that the result depends upon the student's character. Nothing is so good that it may not be put to evil uses; no environment so pure but an evil mind may resist it. Judas had the companionship of Jesus and listened to his incomparable teaching, yet he came to harm even in his Master's presence. The pure in heart, while enlightened by accurate knowledge, are safe anywhere; but such as entertain evil thought and motive are safe nowhere. Having obeyed the apostolic injunction to 'try the spirits,' I humbly thank God for the high result on my interior life, and here assert for the encouragement of others that I have derived nothing but benefit. Trust in God and goodwill to men have not diminished, but increased.

In conclusion, it remains to be indicated in what relation the subject-matter of this book stands to the ever-increasing volume of evidence for spirit-communion which has been contributed in recent years from all parts of the civilised world, and in the light of which many curious records in ancient history may be more clearly understood. I regard book and newspaper tests as a further addition to the 'signs and wonders' by which many in the next life are endeavouring to attract the attention of mortals to the reality of their life and to the true meaning of our temporary existence on earth. Extended knowledge would surely transform the conventional ideas about death, and inspire greater desire to live in harmony with the wise purposes of the Infinite One who, fatherlike, watches over each and all in this world and the next.

## APPENDIX A

### REFERENCES PAST AND PRESENT TO ALLIED PHENOMENA

ALTHOUGH the development of book tests is recent, yet the underlying idea dates back at least as far as the experiments of Sir William Crookes and of the Rev. W. Stainton Moses.

The former, in his *Notes of an Inquiry into the Phenomena called Spiritual*, wrote as follows:—

‘ A lady was writing automatically by means of the planchette. I was trying to devise a means of proving that what she wrote was not due to “unconscious cerebration.” The planchette, as it always does, insisted that, although it was moved by the hand and arm of the lady, the *intelligence* was that of an invisible being who was playing on her brain as on a musical instrument, and thus moving her muscles. I therefore said to this intelligence, “Can you see the contents of this room?” “Yes,” wrote the planchette. “Can you see to read this newspaper?” said I, putting my finger on a copy of the *Times*, which was on a table behind me, but without looking at it. “Yes,” was the reply of the planchette. “Well,” I said, “if you can see that, write the word which is now covered by my finger, and I will believe you.” The planchette commenced to move. Slowly

## Appendix

and with difficulty, the word “however” was written. I turned round and saw that the word “however” was covered by the tip of my finger. I had purposely avoided looking at the newspaper when I tried the experiment, and it was impossible for the lady, had she tried, to have seen any of the printed words, for she was sitting at one table, and the paper was on another table behind, my body intervening.’ This was first published in the *Quarterly Journal of Science* for January, 1874.

*Spirit Teachings* (Memorial Edition), published by the London Spiritualist Alliance, Ltd., London, pp. 31-3, records a book test given to Stainton Moses through his own automatic writing in the year 1873. The reference is as follows:—

‘I inquired how it was possible to give information so minute. It was said to be extremely difficult, possible only when an extremely passive and receptive state in the medium was secured. Moreover, spirits were said to have access to sources of information, so that they could refresh their imperfect recollection.

‘I asked how? By reading; under certain conditions, and with special end in view; or by inquiry, as man does, only to spirits it would be more difficult, though possible.

‘Could my friend himself so acquire information? No; he had too long left the earth, but he mentioned the names of two spirits accustomed occasionally to write, who could perform this feat. I asked

## Appendix

that one of them should be brought. I was sitting waiting for a pupil in a room, not my own, which was used as a study, and the walls of which were covered with bookshelves.

‘The writing ceased, and after an interval of some minutes another kind of writing appeared. I inquired if the newly arrived spirit could demonstrate to me the power alleged.

‘Can you read?’

‘No, friend, I cannot, but Zachery Gray can, and Rector. I am not able to materialise myself, or to command the elements.

‘Are either of those spirits here?’

‘I will bring one by-and-by. I will send. . . . Rector is here.

‘I am told you can read. Is that so? Can you read a book?’

‘(Spirit handwriting changed.)

‘Yes, friend, with difficulty.

‘Will you write for me the last line of the first book of the *Æneid*?’

‘Wait—*Omnius errantem terris et fluctibus aestas.*

‘(This was right.)

‘Quite so. But I might have known it. Can you go to the bookcase, take the last book but one on the second shelf, and read me the last paragraph on the ninety-fourth page? I have not seen it, and do not even know its name.

“I will curtly prove, by a short historical narrative, that popery is a novelty, and has gradually arisen or grown up since the primitive and pure time of Christianity, not only since the apostolic



## Appendix

age, but even since the lamentable union of kirk and the state by Constantine."

'(The book on examination then proved to be a queer one called *Rogers' Antipopriestian, an attempt to liberate and purify Christianity from Popery, Politickality, and Priestrule*. The extract given above was accurate, but the word "narrative" was substituted for "account.")

'How came I to pitch on so appropriate a sentence?

'I know not, my friend. It was by coincidence. The word was changed by error. I knew it when it was done, but would not change.

'How do you read? You wrote more slowly, and by fits and starts.

'I wrote what I remembered, and then I went for more. It is a special effort to read, and useful only as a test. Your friend was right last night: we can read, but only when conditions are very good. We will read once again, and write, and then impress you of the book: "Pope is the last great writer of that school of poetry, the poetry of the intellect, or rather of the intellect mingled with the fancy." That is truly written. Go and take the eleventh book on the same shelf. (I took a book called *Poetry, Romance, and Rhetoric*.) It will open at the page for you. Take it and read, and recognise our power, and the permission which the great and good God gives us, to show you of our power over matter. To Him be glory. Amen.

'(The book opened at page 145, and there was the quotation perfectly true. I had not seen the book before; certainly had no idea of its contents.)'

## Appendix

The *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*, Vol. VIII, 1914, page 413, contains the translation of a paper read by Dr. Geley before a meeting of the French Society for Psychical Research, presided over at the time by Camille Flammarion. The paper deals with the subject of cross-correspondences, but the incident epitomised below bears closely upon the problem of book tests. Since the test sentences were not taken from a book, but presumably improvised for the occasion by the communicator, this avoided the preliminary difficulty of extracting ideas from a printed page. Nevertheless we find the usual problem of a message which can only be understood in its full significance by comparison with paragraphs to be found elsewhere.

Mrs. T. sat in Paris with a friend who wrote automatically. Another friend was visiting Wimereux. Previous experiment had indicated a close touch between her two friends, revealing itself in knowledge of what was happening at some particular moment in each other's vicinity. In one instance a message of some twenty-three words had been written by each lady at the same hour, and these were found to be identical when afterwards compared. The automatist who wrote in Paris asserted that she was able clairvoyantly to see, in the form of lights, the spirit operators who were directing the experiment; the chief of these signed himself *Roudolphe*.

On September 16th, 1913, the automatist sitting at Paris announces that one of these lights is coming

## *Appendix*

and going rapidly. She then writes three sentences which convey no meaning whatever to either Mrs. T. or to herself. They were:—

‘As well behaved as the pupils in a convent for well-trained young ladies.’

‘Their large sweet eyes are used to watching the passing.’

‘The modern lady of fashion whose eyes.’

The following day there arrived by post a script written the previous evening by the automatist at Wimereux. After a short introduction, in which Roudolphe explains the idea of his experiment, it proceeds:—

### ‘THE DEER IN THE BOIS.’

‘Have you sometimes met, dear friend, as you walked in the thickets, the deer that live and roam through the leafy branches, at times . . . [here the automatist noted a pause in the writing] at times like a flock, jumping and frightened, so graceful and fascinating? Have you ever asked yourself what those pretty animals were thinking, and what they would become later? Far be it from me to draw their horoscope (which would after all be of no interest to them), but it seems to me that their mentality must be very different from that which animates the deer of the forest . . . [another pause] strange vehicles running without the aid of an animal’s legs, and in those carriages or along the more or less frequented paths, they have contemplated women with elongated

## Appendix

eyes like their own, delicate and stylish women. Who can ever tell us if . . . [another pause] become so unnaturally large under the dash of the pencil is not a doe of the forest in the throes of retrospective recollections? Dear friend, I have had some trouble because Miss R. tried to understand, but I trust I have succeeded with this childish little story. Affectionate good-night, Roudolphe.'

I now repeat this communication, inserting in italics the above disconnected sentences in the gaps represented by pauses. It will be found to make a complete and intelligible whole.

'Have you sometimes met, dear friend, as you walked in the thickets, the deer that live and circulate through the leafy branches, *at times as well behaved as the pupils in a convent for well-trained young ladies*, at times like a flock, jumping and frightened, so graceful and fascinating? Have you ever asked yourself of what those pretty animals were thinking and what they would become later? Far be it from me to draw their horoscope (which would after all be of no interest to them), but it seems to me that their mentality must be very different from that which animates the deer of the forest. *Their large sweet eyes are used to watching the passing* strange vehicles running without the aid of an animal's legs, and in these carriages or along the more or less frequented paths, they have contemplated women with elongated eyes like their own, delicate and stylish women. Who can ever tell us if *the modern lady of fashion, whose eyes* become so unnaturally large under the dash of the

## Appendix

pencil, is not the doe of the forest in the throes of retrospective recollections?’

In his comments upon this and preceding script Dr. Geley remarks that both mediums were ignorant of the meaning and intention of the sentences they were writing. ‘They both acted as machines worked by a single identical direction, and an independent intelligence.’

Examining the script for explanation of these phenomena, we find that the operating spirits claimed ability to travel rapidly to and fro between the automatists, influencing their writings alternately until the experiment was completed. This brings to mind the reply given to Stainton Moses when he remarked that his book test was written slowly and by fits and starts, ‘I wrote what I remembered, and then I went for more.’

*The Earthen Vessel*, by Lady Glenconner, published by John Lane, in 1921, contains numerous examples of book tests, also an Introduction by Sir Oliver Lodge, F.R.S., upon the problem they present, and their apparent relation to the cross-correspondences and complex literary allusions which, for some years past, have engaged the attention of the Society for Psychical Research.

A Report upon the subject of Book Tests received by members of the Society for Psychical Research has recently been written by Mrs. H. Sidgwick (see *Proc. S.P.R.*, Part LXXXI).



## APPENDIX B

### TESTS FROM THE TITLES OF BOOKS

#### *Titles appear with Book Tests.*

NINE months after the first appearance of book tests there began to be mingled with them references to titles of books, one or more words in a title being made the subject of a test. Instances of this intermingling may be seen in the following communication, copied from notes of April 30th, 1918, with verifications subjoined. It should be kept in mind that Mrs. Leonard has never visited our house.

‘In your study there are books between the window and the fireplace, and a sort of inequality divides the shelves part of the way up. They are a peculiar set of books, and not every one would read them. I can feel when books are of the popular sort, and those are not.’

I recognised this description as accurate in each detail.

‘The fourth book from the left on the second shelf up is one that jumps about in time, skipping from one century to another.’

## *Appendix*

The second page of that book, part of table of contents, refers nine times to different centuries or periods of French literature ; and 190 pages, a substantial section of the volume, trace its history from earliest days to the present time.

‘ A word like “ Interology ” has to do with the subject of the book. The word “ Inter—— ” is right, and the remainder of it might be summed up by the word “ ——ology,” although that is not the word used. This has to do with the whole book.’

It was a French Reader published by the ‘ International Correspondence Schools,’ which title appears in full upon the back. Thus the first part, ‘ Inter— ’ was given with precision, while the second portion was aptly designated by the comprehensive term ‘ ——ology,’ covering the idea of teaching languages by means of text-books and correspondence.

‘ A proper name commencing with “ P ” is prominent, and you will easily notice it.’

This is certainly the fact, for one hundred pages are devoted to Paris, and the name is repeated no less than fifteen times in the contents table, where, I suppose, my communicator found it.

‘ Within a span of the last book is one with title suggesting a subject over which much time is wasted. In the spirit world there is

## Appendix

no need to discuss it! Neither would there be on earth if people tried to realise it within themselves, instead of discussing it so much.'

Immediately above the preceding book stood the *Paradiso* of Dante. This left me in doubt as to what had been meant by saying time was wasted in discussing it; consequently at the next interview I inquired, and was answered that time was wasted when people expressed uncertainty about the existence of Paradise and argued to disprove its reality, when, by simply realising the Divine within themselves, here and now, they might become assured of the Paradise awaiting them hereafter. This teaching I recognised as a familiar thought in my father's sermons, an exposition of St. Paul's belief that our experience of the Holy Spirit within is 'an earnest of our inheritance,' a personally satisfying assurance of the joys to come. (Eph. i. 14.) (2 Cor. v. 5, etc.)

John Wesley considered that it was an important part of his mission to give prominence to this doctrine. It has been strongly emphasised by the Wesleyan Church, and it is not a little interesting to find it thus reiterated by one who, after preaching it on earth, has proved its truth elsewhere.

'Continuing on that shelf, take the sixth book from the left, and on page 57 is something applicable to the present war. The passage is more than half-way down the page, say five-eighths, and fits the state of the war very well, a sort of statement, say a summing up.'

## Appendix

This book was Dante's *Inferno*, and such a title looked appropriate considering the then state of the warring world. Half-way down the designated page commences the passage:—

‘Crowds beneath the water there suspire,  
And make those bubbles on the top appear,  
Where’er thou turn’st thine eyes.’

I took these lines as intended by my communicator to be applicable to the ten thousand sailors who, by that date, had lost their lives at sea; a sort of summing up of naval casualties and losses of life in merchant ships, hospital ships, mine sweepers, and liners. But his actual meaning did not occur to me. Contrary to my usual custom, I read the passage at the next interview, and without making any comment inquired whether these were the lines intended? The reply came instantly:—

‘That is it. He thought it aptly applied to the submarines and the agitation they make beneath the water.’

This was a new idea to me, and for the moment I questioned its relevancy, saying that I had not thought of it in that connection, but supposed he had applied it to the numbers drowned, although I had deemed the word ‘suspire’ somewhat inapplicable.

‘He did not know that the word was  
“suspire,”’ exclaimed Feda, ‘but he was  
E.H.S. 249 S

## Appendix

sure that it was a word implying a manifestation of life, in some way; it seemed to him to suggest anything like snorting or sneezing, some idea based upon the act of respiration, and he considered this an apt reference to the peculiar feature of this war, the U-boats.’<sup>1</sup>

These remarks about the passage, made a fortnight after the test was verified, are interesting as revealing the independent point of view taken by the communicator, and the fact that I had not perceived the full relevancy of the passage until it was subsequently explained to me. It will be observed from the remark upon the word ‘*suspire*,’ that the method used by the communicator at this period enabled him to extract the general sense without any certainty of discovering the actual word or words as they appeared in print. As to the relevancy of such reference to U-boats, one has but to notice the date on which it was made in order to realise its force.

The next statement was about this same book:—

‘An important name commencing with  
“C” occurs much in it.’

The word CANTO in capital letters appears at the top of no fewer than 252 pages; so that this little test was verified.

I was further told that:—

‘Either in the title or at the beginning of

<sup>1</sup> The dictionary definition of the word *Suspire* is ‘to fetch a deep breath, to sigh or breathe.’



## Appendix

the book there is an important name commencing with "A."'

Turning to the preface Dante's family name is seen in the fifth line from the beginning, 'Alighieri.'

'Within a span of the last, and possibly the very next book, is a title giving in a word the present state of the war.'

The book standing next was Dante's *Purgatorio*.

'Remember that the span may be in any direction. Within that distance above the last is a title describing what your father hopes you may one day wear. It is not an ordinary article like a hat.'

When proceeding to verify this test I noticed that, as the *Purgatorio* was on the top shelf, a mistake had evidently been made in saying this title stood above it. As search along surrounding titles failed to reveal anything applicable, I wrote this down as failure, and said so at the next interview. Upon hearing this, Fedra appeared to refer to the communicator, and then said that a mistake had been made in describing the position; it was not above, but below the previous book.

'He is inclined to think that what he intended is contained in a sub-title or is on the flyleaf. Look inside the books just below.'

I returned home without much expectation of

## Appendix

success, but investigation six inches below the *Purgatorio* revealed half a dozen numbers of Bartholomew's County Maps, which have upon their covers a trade-mark consisting of a globe surrounded by the publisher's name and *surmounted by a crown*. Besides which, and still within the span distance, there were eleven numbers of a small instruction book having a similar sort of trade-mark embodied in the title and *surmounted by a crown*. There were thus no fewer than seventeen crowns within the stipulated distance. Such symbolic reference to a crown was entirely appropriate to my father's habit of expression in his earthly days. Observe the obvious clue given, 'not an ordinary article like a hat.'

'Somewhat to the left of that is a title in which is mentioned something that should be avoided. You might resent any one suggesting that you need to avoid it. Remember it is only given by way of a test.'

A few inches to the left was a book by Anatole France with the word 'Crime' prominent in its title, *Le Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard*. At the next interview I inquired if it had been observed that this title was in French?

'No, it would be all the same to him whatever language it was written in. You might try some day with a book in Chinese, Japanese, or any out-of-the-way language. Only be sure that it has first been read by some one who thoroughly understood it.'

## *Appendix*

This indication of limitation suggests that, at this period, little reliance was placed upon clairvoyance, and that the 'sensing' of titles was accomplished by something akin to psychometry, a perception of thoughts which had been evoked in the minds of those who read them.

### *Titles used as Tests—Illustrations from many Sitzings*

In giving further examples of title tests, it would be tedious to record with each the explicit directions given for finding the title required. The phrase most frequently used was, 'within a span,' and the span was to be measured from some book, the position of which was exactly defined by reference to room, position of shelves, number of shelf, and number of book from right or left side as stated. Nothing was left to chance save the length of the span; my span is nine inches. The following examples, with the single exception of the first, were found within that distance from the books given as measuring centres. It must not be supposed that the hundreds of books on my shelves remained in their accustomed places during these experiments. They were purposely disarranged repeatedly, numbers being removed at random from one part of the room to another. The only difference noticeable was my difficulty in finding books required in the course of my usual studies. Their constant displacement inconvenienced me,

## Appendix

but apparently made no difference to the accuracy of my communicator in placing tests.

The agreement between statements received and the presence of appropriate titles within the indicated spaces, can scarcely strike the reader with the same force I felt when first discovering it. As month followed month, and the experiment continued to be successful, the conviction became absolute that the intelligence giving these messages through Mrs. Leonard and her control had actually been in the study taking note of the position of my books. And this new proof was supplementary to a considerable body of evidence pointing in the same direction.

The following is of interest for the comment attached:—

‘ Within a span seems to be a title suggesting growth, and growth of the right kind too; in connection with this book you will remember B., a well-known man, who would heartily agree with the ideal expressed by the title and with the ideals of the whole book.’

The title on this occasion proved to be rather beyond the span, actually the distance was 12½ inches, and was *Aggressive Christianity*, by Mrs. Booth. That Christianity should grow in influence by aggressive activities was, as the whole world is aware, the firm conviction of the late General Booth, who, with the help of the authoress, his wife, founded the Salvation Army.

Into the interesting question why initials rather

## Appendix

than names are usually given, I must not here enter. That the names are known is proved by adequate evidence, but the exact nature of the processes of communication must be studied before one can fully appreciate the reason why some facts can be given and others only obliquely indicated.

‘Almost next the last mentioned, next or next but one, is a title expressing what all should avoid, not merely students of the occult, but all Christians also.’

Next but one to the above book was *Agnosticism*.

‘Above the fourteenth book, or nearly above it, there is a title which will remind you of your Uncle Alfred.’

Fearing that this was insufficiently definite, I inquired if it would remind me of his tastes or of his name? It was answered that the connection would strike me at once. Despite that assurance I was prepared for failure, as I had never yet been reminded of this uncle by anything on my shelves, excepting by two volumes he had given me in my student days and which were not likely to be in this part of the room. But when, on returning to my study, I looked with mild curiosity at the row of books immediately above the fourteenth, one of them by a double connection brought this uncle to my mind. It was a book written by his father, and on its back was the name which, saving



## Appendix

one initial, was identical with his. The uncle's name was A. W. Thomas, and on the title appeared J. W. Thomas. This book stood *perpendicularly* above number 14.

It had been a good year for fruit, and my father made some references to the produce of our garden and the preserve which he noticed was being made in our house. He did not say 'preserve' however, but used the simpler term as he had invariably done when on earth. Among the tests given was the following, which was to be found within a span of a certain book we had been discussing:—

'Something there reminds him of your jam.'

I found it difficult to believe that any book of mine could answer this description, whether by title, publisher, or author's name. It seemed incredible. But inspection showed that, lying upon the top of the others, and but two inches away from the identical book which was to be my guide to it, there was a small volume with the simple title, *James*. I can confidently say that never previously had I noticed the suggestiveness of the first three letters of this common name.

Two references were greetings for the season.

'Within a span is a title expressing his Christmas wish for you.'

The title was *Heart's Ease*. This was given

## Appendix

before Christmas ; during the first sitting in January came another:—

‘ Within a span is a title expressing a New Year’s wish to you in particular; he would like to include Clara (my wife’s name), but is afraid he must leave her out of this. You will see from the title what is meant; open on the name or sub-title, and it will give you the clue as to why he cannot include Clara in this.’

I found it impossible to conjecture any title which, as a New Year’s wish, would not be equally suitable for my wife as for myself. But my father constantly exhibits a mental ingenuity which surpasses mine. Immediately beneath the book from which the span was to be measured, I found *The Book of Enoch*, edited by Professor Charles and exhibiting the motto of the Oxford University Press, *Dominus Illuminatio Mea*. No wish for the New Year could be more gratifying than this prayer for Divine enlightenment, while the fact of its being coupled with the name Charles gives an easy clue to the reason why it had been singled out as personal to me. My name is Charles. This prayer, together with the name Charles, is found both upon the back of the book and on its title-page.

‘ Within a span is a title taking one back a very long time, a thousand years or more.’

This was *The Minor Prophets*.

## *Appendix*

The following is an illustration of the way in which the communicator is able to puzzle me, even upon those rare occasions when I have a fair idea of the books likely to be found in the place from which he is selecting the test.

‘Coming now to the lower shelf next the door, there is a title close to the door suggesting Greek or Grecian.’

In this instance I was able to recollect that the books nearest the door upon the bottom shelf had been bought second-hand for purposes of reference. I had not yet used the books, and thought of them collectively as ‘Early Fathers of the Church.’ That they would relate to Greek was certain, but I anticipated some reference in the preface to Greek writings, or possibly a Greek quotation on the title-page. That there was nothing Greek or Grecian on the titles proper I felt fairly certain. What, then, was my astonishment to notice that the second from the door included in its title the name ‘Athenagoras.’ This is entirely Grecian in its suggestion, and the book states that Athenagoras was a philosopher of Athens.

The next illustration similarly turns upon an author’s name. It was prefaced by the remark,—

‘This is very interesting,’ and proceeded, ‘Close to the last book named, he saw one containing a name very closely connected with this medium. Strictly speaking, it is the

## Appendix

title, but he is uncertain whether he obtained the connection from the title or from the title-page.'

Exactly twelve inches from the book alluded to was one which had the following upon both back and title-page: *With God in my Garden. Fifty-two talks to Children. Leonard E. Dowsett.* While the name Leonard has more than one form of spelling, it is here identical with the medium's. Had I been asked on my way to this sitting, and it was my twentieth, if the name Leonard appeared upon my shelves, I should have replied that, if it did so appear, I certainly had not noticed the fact.

'Within a span is a title suggesting tarnished metal; he does not think it intended that, but it impressed him with that meaning.'

Exactly a span's length distant was A. C. Benson's book, *The Thread of Gold*. Gold thread will, in process of time, become tarnished. It is curious how in these tests a vague idea seems to have been caught by my communicator which, while almost always correct in a way, is often anything but obvious or what the majority of people would first think of on seeing such titles. Yet, even with us, the laws of mental association produce widely varying results, and will even do this with the same person at different times and under changed conditions.

'Within a span is a title which expresses

## Appendix

to him "the eyes of youth," or, as seen through eyes of youth; it gave him the idea very plainly. He thinks these words are not there, but the title is only as seen through the eyes of youth.'

Close by stood Sulley's book, *Children's Ways*.

'Within a span is a title expressing an adventure which would be very interesting to you, a course of conduct, a condition gone into, but by way of being an adventure. It would appeal to you, but you would have to be careful. He thinks and hopes you do not wish to go into it. There are reasons why it would not be advisable at present.'

The book was Dean Plumtre's *The Spirits in Prison*, which deals with our Lord's mission to the unhappy souls of the lower spirit realm. Those who have read the vivid narratives of the Rev. G. Vale Owen will have little difficulty in perceiving the relevance of this allusion.

'Also within a span is a book with a word on the outside, but not in the title proper, signifying quite up to date. He thinks it is not in the title, yet is on the outside of the book.'

It was, *A Harmony of the Gospels in the Revised Version*.

'Within a span is a title suggesting a teaching which is much turned and twisted to suit particular ideas by certain people, thus causing much misconception.'



## Appendix

This was *The Indwelling Spirit*. Here we have one of the central facts of Christianity; in degree as it is experimentally understood and enjoyed we have illumination for the intellect, love for the heart, strength and guidance for the life. '*If any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His.*'—Rom. viii. 9. Had this teaching been consistently given the prominence it holds in the New Testament, the history of Christianity would have been spared its darker chapters.

'About three books distant is a very striking title. It refers to that upon which we should fix our mental vision and always strive more quickly towards.'

Here, as not infrequently, my father seizes upon what serves his purpose and disregards the remainder. Sometimes he fixes upon an author's name, sometimes upon the full title, and at other times, as in this instance, upon a few special words. He leaves me to discover the exact turn of his thought, which there is rarely any difficulty in doing. *Books which Influenced our Lord and His Apostles* was the full title of the book standing *third* from the above landmark. Knowing my father as I did, and understanding the aspirations of his inner life, it is easy to recognise the significance of his emphasis upon the two central words, and with the deeper reverence attained through these studies, which have opened for me new heavens as well as a new earth, I bow, as does my father, before this exalted name, 'OUR LORD.'

GLASGOW: W. COLLINS SONS AND CO. LTD.

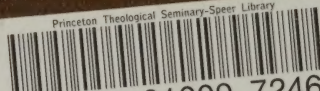








Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 01009 7246